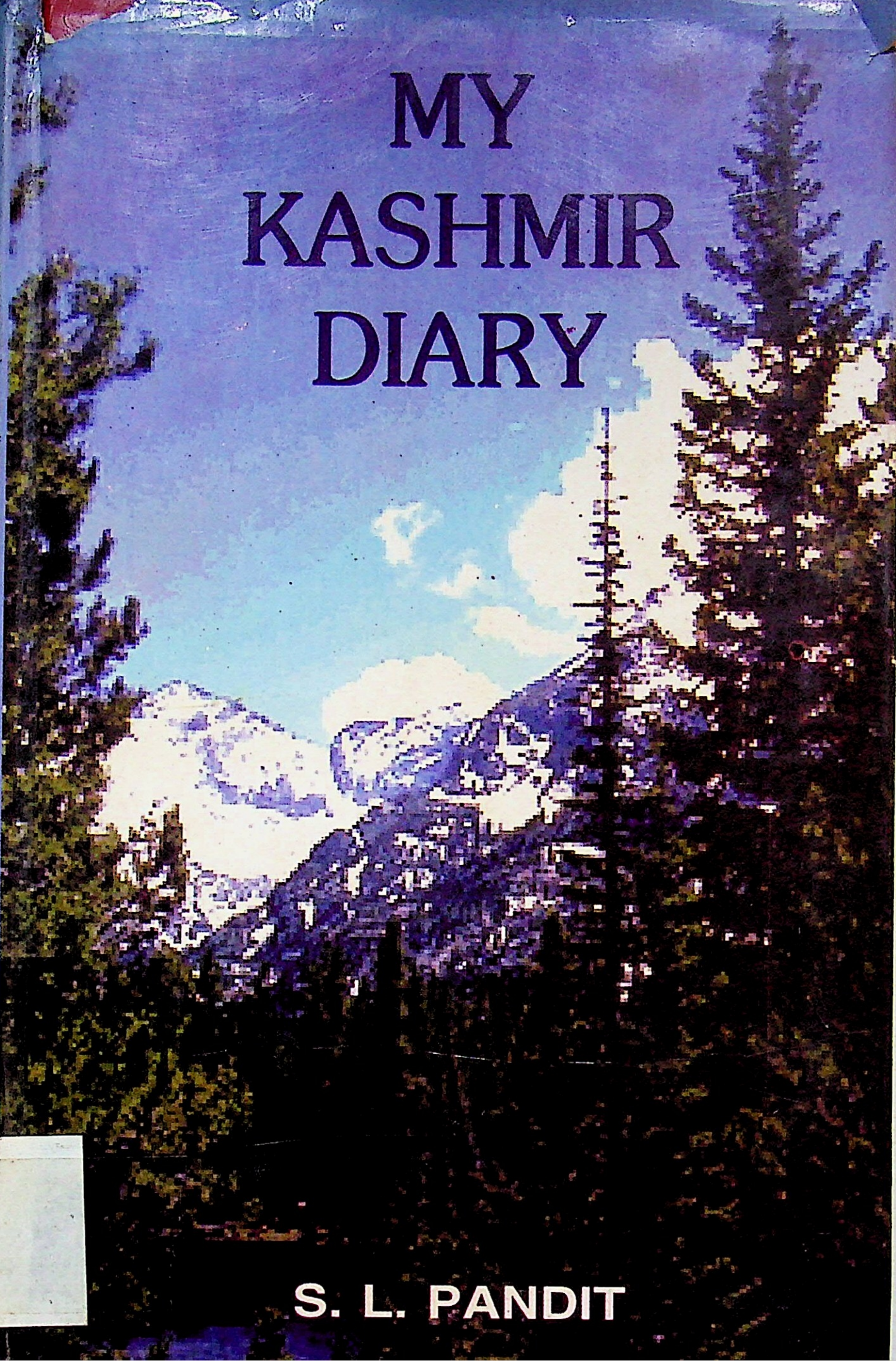
MY KASHMIR DIARY



S. L. PANDIT

About The Book

My Kashmir Diary is a collection of essays and miscellaneous writings of Prof. S.L.Pandit. It is the surviving fruit of nearly four decades of his literary activity; the rest went up in smoke in November, 1990, with the burning and sacking of his house at Srinagar. The author has divided the book into four sections. Section I : 'Down Memory Lane' is mostly autobiographical with two essays about his association with the Ramakrishna Mission. Section II : 'Kashmir Past & Present' contains twelve perceptive essays on recent history of Kashmir, the vital question of what is Kashmiriyat, and the present predicament of Kashmir Pandits. Section III : 'Perceptions of a Dedicated Teacher' consists of some of the author's retrieved research papers on literature and a convocation address that he delivered at Jalandhar after his retirement. Three reviews and two additional essays form Section IV : 'Some Miscellany & Book Reviews'. On the whole, *My Kashmir Diary* is a comprehensive collection that gives the reader a fair idea of the author's keen interest in history, literature and society, and reveals his flare for writing and sharing his thoughts with others.

Rs. 395/- U.S. $ 20

MY KASHMIR DIARY

Prof. S.L. Pandit

UTPAL PUBLICATIONS
R-22, 2nd Floor, Khaneja Complex,
Shakarpur, Delhi - 110092
Ph. : 2464458, 6493456

First Published 1999

Published by
Lokesh Kaul For
UTPAL PUBLICATIONS
R-22, Khaneja Complex
Main Market, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092
Phone : 2464458, 6493456

ISBN :81-85217-11-4
Price Rs. 395/- U.S. $ 20

Composed By : Impression Graphics
Printed in India at
Bharat Photocomposers Naveen Shahdara, Delhi-110032

Dr. KARAN SINGH
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
[RAJYA SABHA]

3, NYAYA MARG
CHANAKYAPURI
NEW DELHI 110021

20 June 1999

FOREWORD

When I first went up to Srinagar as Head of State on 20 June 1949, exactly 50 years ago, I had just turned eighteen and was an under-graduate. I soon decided to pursue my studies that had been interrupted due to the partition and a medical problem which took me to America for treatment. I decided to work for the B.A. examination of the Jammu & Kashmir University of which I was Chancellor (perhaps that should figure in the Guineas Book of Records!). One of the subjects was English literature and it was then that Professor S.L. Pandit, who was teaching English at one of the premier colleges in Srinagar, started coming to the house to coach me for the English syllabus which included Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* that I had done earlier for the Senior Cambridge examination from the Doon School. Our association, therefore, goes back almost half a century.

Prof Pandit has had a long and distinguished academic career, and it is most fortunate that at his advanced age he is still active and continues to write from time to time. Several friends suggested to him that he might put down some of his reminiscences in the form of a book, which I am glad to say he has now done. ***My Kashmir Diary*** is not only very well written, but throws light on a large number of areas connected with that beautiful valley -- its history, its culture and the tragedies that have befallen it, specially the vastly talented Kashmiri Pandit community. However, the book is not confined only to Kashmir. There are some interesting articles on Shakespeare, Tagore, Thomas Hardy and other eminent writers, as well as a small selection of book reviews. All in all, this book will be of considerable interest to students of contemporary India. I have great pleasure in writing this foreword and commending Prof S.L. Pandit's book to the interested readers.

Karansingh

Karan Singh

Preface

I suppose I owe it to the likely readers of this publication to explain why I have ventured to appear in print at a very advanced stage—plus 90 years-of my life. I recall now that, right from my early school days, I was stirred by a persistent desire to extend my readings beyond the prescribed text books. In due course this urge led me to a continuing craving to own and treasure books of my choice, not only in English, but also in Urdu, Hindi, Persian and Kashmiri. Next, the first opportunity to write for print came to me when I started writing for *The Pratap*, the College magazine issued by Shri Pratap College, Srinagar. These first juvenile early writings led to a sort of recognition when my kind teachers at the College selected me for the distinction of being appointed as the first "Student Editor" of *The Pratap* towards the close of my degree course by 1927-28 at the college. Since then, as I recall, I came to be associated with the editorial duties of all such educational journals at all the institutions where I was a student and later as a teacher. My unbroken career as a college and university teacher covered about four decades, when I taught from the Intermediate to the post-graduate levels and also served as a college principal in two spells for about ten years. During this period I recall that I produced a number of creditable research papers contributed to, apart from college journals, to *The Jammu and Kashmir University Review*, of which I functioned as the Editor-in-Chief from 1958 to 1963. Moreover, some of my research articles appeared also in *The Twentieth Century*, a reputed monthly journal, issued from Allahabad back in the thirties and forties of this century. Moreover, some of my literary pieces found place also in the publications of the All India English Teachers' Conference in which I was an active participant for about fifteen years. Let me also remind my readers that I had opportunities to serve

on the staffs of what was then called the Prince of Wales College at Jammu & later at the S.P. College and the Amar Singh College, Srinagar, till I was selected in 1956 as the first Head of the Post graduate Department of English at the University of Jammu & Kashmir, Srinagar. Finally, after I completed my service career in J & K by the close of 1963, I accepted the principal-ship of the Panjab University Evening College at Jalandhar from where I finally retired from active service by August 1970.

By this time, I and my late wife decided to move back to Kashmir, where I felt content in comparative retirement. I did not want to accept any more jobs, that came my way twice, and found myself content through my continued associations with the activities at the University campus at Nasim Bagh, Srinagar, and my links with the governing bodies of two very popular private educational institutions in Srinagar. So, while I continued to stay in peaceful content in Kashmir, I and my wife would move down to Delhi for a few winter months, I was also planning to recast some memories of my long-term experiences of having worked with some of the outstanding educationists and educational administrators like Professors N.K. Sidhanta & Lawrence Brander of Lucknow University, Vice-Chancellors like Asaf A.Fyzee, K.M. Panikkar, A.C. Joshi (of Punjab), Professor Suraj Bhan of the D.A.V. Educational Movement and some well known educationists like Professor V.K. Gokak and Professor Narasimhaiya of Mysore. During these years of my comparative retirement I sometimes felt that Srinagar in Kashmir was more peaceful and more crime free than the steadily expanding federal capital of Delhi-New Delhi. To cut this narrative short, while I was planning in my peaceful leisure to complete my memoirs and to collect for publication my research papers, some of which had been approved by Dr. Sidheshwar Verma, savant and scholar from Jammu, and Professor Wilson Knight of U.K. for my papers on Shakespeare, came the phase of foreign-sponsored militant onslaught in the

Valley which reached a climax of intensity by the close of 1989. The sheer *inept mishandling* of the situation by the then rulers in New Delhi plunged the Valley of Kashmir into a state of total breakdown of normal administration from which the region has not as yet fully recovered. I need not dwell in detail on my losses when my modest house at Karan Nagar, Srinagar, was first torched in daylight hours in November 1990, and later ransacked of all that lay inside. Among these depredations I regard as most painful the loss of my selective collection of books gathered over fifty years and the destruction of all my personal and family records. So what I am now earnestly offering my readers in this volume is a fragmentary recast of my memoirs and the sheer chance retrieval of some of my literary research material. I have supplemented these by a number of my non-academic pieces covering some of the salient phases of the tragic complexities in which my home state of Jammu & Kashmir got involved right from 1946-47 to 1989. These articles appeared in journals based in Jammu & Delhi and could not be destroyed. Let the readers judge them for what they are worth.

Further, I should like to dedicate this volume to the memories of my old students, some of whom have done very well in various fields of life and still maintain occasional contacts with me. Among these I may mention General O.P. Malhotra, retired Army Chief, two chief ministers- Dr. Farooq Abdullaha of J & K and Shri P.K. Dhumal of Himachal Pradesh- and some distinguished teachers, like Professors A.N.Kaul of Delhi University, Dr. M.L.Raina of Panjab University, Dr. V.N. Datta, Professor Emeritus of Kurukhshetra University, and Late Qudrat Ullah Shahab, I.C.S., originally from Jammu, who opted for Pakistan in 1947 and distinguished himself as an upright and competent administrator and as a sensitive writer in Urdu. I had occasion to go through some of his latest Urdu writings, including his voluminous *Shahab Nama,* through the courtesy of some

Pakistani friends of my children now working in U.S.A.. Let me finally record that I should venture to dedicate this modest publication principally to Dr. Karan Singhji, M.P, scion of one of the principal ruling dynasties of yester years, but now certainly a distinguished person in his own right by virtue of his deep and wide-ranging scholarship and as a political activist of stainless integrity. I feel proud of having known him since 1952 as a very ardent and ideal student when I had an opportunity of guiding him as a private candidate for his first degree course at the University of Jammu & Kashmir. I feel grateful to him for his having graciously agreed to write a foreward to this modest venture in publication.

Before I close, let me record my tribute to Radha Rani, my late life partner who, by virtue of her innate practical wisdom and rare large-heartedness, helped me to hold our large family together and left me free to pursue what Aldous Huxley once humorously called "the besetting vice of reading". Finally, I have to record my thanks to my son, Moti Lal, formerly of the Post-graduate Department of English at the University of Kashmir, Srinagar, and my student for many years, for having helped me to put in order these writings, partly retrieved from the ravages of time and history.

May 1999 S.L.Pandit.

Contents

SECTION - I

Down Memory Lane

1. Life in a Kashmir Village : 1912-1919 1
2. About Myself 7
3. My Grandparents 11
4. My Parents 15
5. My Brother's Face 20
6. My Late Life's Partner-for My Children 24
7. Anantnag : 1919-1922 29
8. Swami Ranganathananda Maharaj :a Tribute 33
9. Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda : a Review. 39

SECTION - II

Kashmir Past & Present

1. Some Salient Aspects of Kashmir History 47
2. Kashmir as They Saw Her. 51
3. J & K Before August 15, 1947 56
4. The Kashmir Problem 63
5. Countdown to Independence 70
6. J & K : Complexities of Conflict, 1998 75
7. Where is Kashmiriyat ? 89
8. Kashmiri Pandits & Kashmiriyat 95
9. The Problems of Kashmiri Migrants 102
10. Losses Galore 117
11. Kashmiri Pandits : What Next ? 121
12. Challenges to K.P. Identity 128

SECTION - III

Perceptions of a Dedicated Teacher

1. The Place of Books in Life 139
2. Ego and Escapism. 147
3. Communication and Literature. 152
4. Tagore as a Playwright. 156
5. Variety of Styles in Shakespeare 175
6. Decline of the Hero. 188
7. Treatment of Religion in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* 196
8. A Convocation Address 208

SECTION - IV

Some Miscellany & Book Reviews

1. Anatomy of Violence 218
2. Shivratri in Kashmir 225
3. *Bureaucrazy : I.A.S. Unmasked* by M. K. Kaw 229
4. *Self -study in a Circle* by P. Krishan Kaul 233
5. *Come with Me to India* by Sudha Kaul 235

SECTION

I

Down Memory Lane

Life in a Kashmir Village: 1912-1919

I suppose I may not claim to have led a particularly eventful life. But I happen to belong to a generation that has been witness to a momentous chunk of global history, often moving at a tempestuous speed unprecedented in the recorded annals of mankind. To begin , I should, however, prefer to turn to a comparatively unspectacular phase of my experience, covering my early years passed in the timeless quietude of a village in the Valley of Kashmir.

I was born about the middle of January 1908, in a village in southern Kashmir, close to the inner foothills of the Pir Panchal Range. I call the place "a village". But though it was a typical rural hamlet, it was somewhat above the level of an ordinary village, something akin to *rus in urbe* (the country in town) as Thomas Hardy described his Casterbridge. It has been for long the headquarters of a Revenue Officer and a Magistrate: and once not so very long ago history touched its soil, for it was here that Pandit Birbal Dhar was detained under surveillance by the Pathan Governor of Kashmir before he effected his escape across the southern mountain passes and made his way to the court of Ranjit Singh and persuaded that doughty Sikh ruler of the Punjab to invade and annex Kashmir to his dominions. And, by the time I grew conscious of my environment, the place could already boast of a post office, a Government dispensary,

a primary school, a police post and a cart road linking it with the district headquarters and with the metropolis of Srinagar.

When I now mentally glance back over the chequered tablet of my memory, I can clearly recall mv impressions of the place when I was hardly four years old. Round where my people lived then was a group of about a dozen thatched mud houses inhabited mostly by Brahmins, a sort of *mohalla* separated from the market place by the sheltering barrier of a flat-topped plateau that stretched towards the west for about the distance of a kilometer. One of the most sensational events of that distant time was the first appearance in our village of a motor car in which Raja Hari Singh, then heir apparent of the Dogra ruling house, drove through the place on towards a dirt road across the wide expanse of the river course on a hunting expedition in the forest-clad foothills lying beyond. Practically all the inhabitants would come out to witness the miracle of this magic car. And whenever the car negotiated a sharp bend in the road, the crowds would shout and take fast to their heels lest this strange vehicle over-run them in its speedy course.

It was a time when both my grandparents were alive and they and my parents and uncles and unmarried aunts lived together in a modest house of mud bricks with a roof thatched with paddy straw. Our way of living was quite low by present-day standards, but we lived a life above want. There was no dearth of rice or vegetables or milk and milk products at any time of the year. My

grandfather owned a large chunk of fertile paddy growing land; and with the additional resources of domestic milch cattle and several vegetable patches we were able to meet our basic requirements, not only for our large joint family but also for the needs of relatives and others who were frequently on visits to our home. Sometimes even strangers travelling on business or on pilgrimages to holy places had to be fed and sheltered in our home. There was no question of turning away any wayfarer or *sadhu* (hermit) who knocked at our door; that would be against the deeprooted and long practised cultural traditions of our Brahmin ethos.

Where we lived was a sort of defile touching on the northern side a vast expanse of terraced paddy fields, stretching as far as the eye could reach; and , on the other side, separated from the center of the town by a running brook flowing along the base of the afore-mentioned plateau. According to tradition this site was chosen for residence by our remote ancestor who, some time in the fifteenth century, migrated from Rainawari, Srinagar, to this place. Perhaps this move of his was connected with the long-term plans of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin to rehabilitate and settle Brahmin families in rural Kashmir. All the Brahmin houses in our neighborhood traced their descent from this remote pioneer. In addition there were four or five Muslim families around us. They comprised mostly farm labour and had been made to settle there by my great-grandfather.

The rest of this village-cum-town lay sprawled over the southern slope of the plateau with a number of habitations in the comparatively level space at its foot. The place could even then boast of a "main street"- running straight across the middle of the slope with about two to three dozen shops established on both its flanks. About the middle of this street and towards its southern flank was the tomb of Sayed Simnani Sahib, one of the most revered followers of Amir Kabir Shah Hamdan. The Muslims of the surrounding countryside had great veneration for the shrine; and every autumn on a full moon day and night a fair or *urs* would be held at the place; and this fair was thronged by thousands of people from nearby villages. A little beyond this shrine and at the left eastern extremity of the main street stood the Juma Masjid. It was built of burnt brick, and was easily the most massive building at the place.

Down below at the foot of the slope of the plateau was the Hindu shrine of Goddess Kulvageswari, with a stone idol of the goddess installed inside a temple and a perennial, spring of fresh water flowing in the compound. This area of our village had several other springs flowing around and a number of meandering brooks crisscrossing the plain. Beyond the Hindu shrine lay a stretch of flat ground on which were located the Tehsil and Treasury Offices; the Police Station, the Government dispensary and the Government Primary School.

The most outstanding feature of the village, however, was the panoramic view of the whole Valley of

Kashmir that could be had from the flat top of the plateau. Looking towards north and east one's field of vision stretched as far as the distant Harmukh peaks and not so distant inner vales that led up to Pahalgam and Kokar Nag. But the most impressive sight was a close view towards south of the Pir Panchal Range, with the majestic snow-clad triple peaks above Kausar Nag. I can recall how, in later years, I felt thrilled as these peaks, "three silent pinnacles of aged snow," emerged into view flushed in rosy splendour by the rising sun when, during my journeys homewards, the morning railway train approached Sialkot from the important rail junction of Wazirabad. Now both these towns are in Pakistan.

In our home the authority of my grandfather was supreme. But in all day-to-day domestic affairs, my grandmother ruled the roost. In those distant days people round us had no idea of politics. And though we the Brahmin families comprised a very small religious minority in the village, we were not aware of any basic conflict between different religious communities. Our closest family friends were a few Muslim gentlemen. Nobody had then heard of "secularism" but Hindus and Muslims always respected each others' religious sentiments. I remember how my grandmother would send offerings of fresh milk both to the temple of Bhavani and the tomb of Syed Simnani whenever any of her kine had newly calved. And she strictly forbade the cooking in our house of any food considered unclean by the Muslims. It was verily, in some respects at least, a time

when it seemed in the words of the poet, that "God was in his heaven, and all was well with the world."

Well, that was the tenor of life in the years 1912-19 in the place where I was born in 1908. In April, 1919, I left the place, first in search of higher eduction and later in pursuit of other undertakings in my life. It is true that during the past seventy years and more I have been on frequent visits to my native place, sometimes for a few months at a time during long vacations. But in 1919 it in a way ceased to be my only and sort of permanent abode, the one spot that during those formative years of my consciousness remained for me the center of the universe. The place itself is now changed almost beyond recognition. But the impressions and memories of those early years remain stamped indelibly on my consciousness.

About Myself

When I think of continuing this serial under the above noted title, I pause for a while to ponder why I need inflict the record of my memories on any likely readers. No doubt, I have led a fairly active life as a teacher for about forty years. But I have never attained the status of a public figure, much less that of a scientist, or a scholar,or an original thinker. Nevertheless , I may claim without being unduly immodest, that I have been fairly successful in my profession, and I measure this success by the amount of regard I have somehow been able to win from my students. They constitute a very large crowd and some of them have attained outstanding distinctions in various walks of life. They comprise for me a large family made up of those whom I like to call "the children of my spirit" as distinct from "the children of my flesh". Now, in my retirement, I often wonder what I have done for them to win their affection. They turn up in my path at odd moments and at odd places and I feel utterly embarrassed when sometimes I find it difficult to place them correctly. In fact, but for this very large and widely dispersed family, I should regard myself as an utterly unknown and inconsequential individual.

When I have made this point, I still do not feel convinced that my reminiscences have any relevance today except possibly for some different reasons. Let me mention here that I belong to a generation that has, in the

course of half a century and more, witnessed a tremendous amount of history moving at a breathtaking speed. Some of us still carry vague impressions of the First World War. Our student days coincided with the epic struggle of our country for liberation from a strongly entrenched foreign colonial rule. We have lived through that short and most bloody phase of our recent history which culminated in the independence and partition of a vast subcontinent. On the social plane we have watched revolutionary changes taking place even in our exclusively small and closed society of Kashmiri Brahmins, a society that had remained in a state of rigid ossification for at least five hundred years. I am afraid that for those of our young men and women born after 1947 it may not be easy to visualize adequately the revolutionary changes that men and women of my generation have witnessed, as much in our little social world as in the larger world beyond the limited confines of our social milieu and our country.

Next, my own story as an individual may have some interest for our young readers. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, I was born and raised in a lower middle class family of Brahmins in a rural setting in Kashmir. As regards myself and my family, though in our Brahmin tradition a least all the male members have been devoted to reading and writing for countless generations, I - as the eldest child of my parents-was the first of our clan to take to modern education and to learn English. My father and grandfather were well versed in Sanskrit and Persian.

All their private correspondence was carried on through the medium of Persian, and I am happy to be in possession of some manuscripts and books written in their hands. When I was young, our village could boast of only a primary school; and for eduction beyond this stage, I had to move to several more important centers of learning in Kashmir and beyond, as I progressed in my academic career. The overall changes registered since that time can be measured better by the fact that my birthplace now has a higher secondary school (with science and agriculture faculties), a high school for girls, a privately managed high school, and a basic model school upto the eighth class. Now, as a family, our large clan too has prospered and made good in many fields. My younger brothers, their children, and my own children have done pretty well in different spheres of life in places outside our state and even beyond the geographical confines of our country. Surely, I can claim a little gratification and pride in having given a lead in the "making of the family."

To have watched history in the making can by itself be a privilege and an education. It staggers the imagination when I sometimes ponder over what men of my generation have been through. We followed the course of the Second World War from day to day with breathless excitement. Every moment of those six long years was pregnant with fateful and unforeseeable developments. And at the end what tremendous forces got loose all over the world! August, 1945, ushered in the Atomic Age, when the first nuclear bombs were dropped on the two Japanese

cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Next there followed the liberation processes of subject peoples, movements that spread like prarie fire right across Asia and then over the dark continent of Africa; and then the lining up of the world forces between the two super industrial and military powers of the U.S.A. and the U.S.R.R., and subsequent emergence of the Third Force of the non-aligned nations under the inspiration of liberated India's first Prime Minister. Possibly, in the context of this highly complicated and still fast-changing world scene, some of our much younger contemporaries may find it of interest to know of a much simpler way of life of two generations back, a way that is now changed beyond recognition and beyond recall!

My Grandparents

My grandparents were an interesting couple that, during my early childhood, dominated a fairly large family. My grandfather breathed his last at the age of sixty-nine years in November 1917, when I was about ten yeas old. My grandmother was younger to him by about thirteen years and survived her husband by about fifteen years. They raised a large family of four sons and four daughters and left their impress on the functioning of what was then a joint household.

My grandfather was born in 1848 and was the only surviving child of his parents. Obviously, he was the apple of their eyes and must have been greatly spoiled in his younger days by both of them. I have often heard from my father that my grandfather was intensely attached to his mother. He was well-read in classical Persian literature and could read and recite some of our popular Sanskrit scriptures. I have in my possession a Persian document written by him in early 1917, It is a sort of will he wrote for his sons when he had a severe attack of what was probably intestinal colic in early 1917; and, thinking that his end was near, he wrote out the document and kept it in his private papers where it was found after his demise a few months later. It is in chaste Persian with appropriate quotations from Hafiz and S'adi.

My grandfather recovered from his illness of early 1917 and resumed his normal way of living till October

of the same year. He was in his own way an ardent devotee of the Divine Mother and continued performing his daily *puja* and *japa* till about the middle of October. About this time it appears he was overcome by some inner spiritual crisis, the significance of which was beyond my understanding at the time. He took to his bed and decided to go on an indefinite fast, for "self-purification" as he would say. Though I was hardly ten years old at that time, I remember that no persuasions from my father, my grandmother and friends and others close to him would induce him even to sip a cup of fruit juice. He grew weaker and weaker day by day till he expired on the eighth of the bright half of Kartika month of the lunar Hindu calendar. It was a sacred day and his end was peaceful, his last thought being about his Maker.

My grandfather was a lucky person in several ways. His fond parents doted on him. But he was known as an extremely guileless person who could be taken in easily by any clever rogue. In his adult life he functioned for some years as the hereditary village headman and the local revenue official. But, after some years on these jobs, he resigned and fell back on the modest resources of his landed property. This property was sufficient to keep the wolf from the door; and, as I have been told by my parents, he remained always above want. Besides, my father who was his eldest son relieved him of running the household when he (my father) was still in his teens. I still remember that my grandfather would feel somewhat upset whenever my father was away from

home. But I bear in mind the old patriarch chiefly because of his intense attachment for me as the eldest child of his eldest son. There was something almost maternal about his love for me. In spite of the vast difference of age between us, I felt no reservations in my dealings with him. For example, when I started my studies at the local primary school, I would usually inform him from day to day of what lessons I had learnt. He would chuckle with delight on such occasions and convey the news to other members of the family, I can still recall that during those days, by contrast, I felt some awe of my father and would never dare to be so free with him.

My, grandfather was much respected in the small village community. His means were moderate, but he would lob out quantities of paddy in the form of charity and gifts even, every year when the autumn harvest was gathered. One of the regular recipients of such generosity, appears to have been a poet of some sort, a Muslim gentleman who wrote a verse elegy in Kashmiri on his death. A copy of this elegy is with me, and I can quote here the rendering of a couplet from it :-

"Streets and bazaars rang with cries of lamentation,
Oh, where has gone Prakash Ram of kindly nature!"

My grandmother was in many respects a contrast to her husband. She was outspoken and domineering, a veritable foil to her mild-mannered spouse. My impression is that while my grandfather wanted to avoid domestic scenes and situations, my grandmother was never afraid of calling a spade a spade. I have known her

for a longer period and I have often wondered how the two got along in the course of their wedded life, for my grandmother could on occasions fly into high temper and could not possibly have functioned as a proverbial docile Hindu wife. But, with all her aggressive temperament, her heart was full of love not only for her own kith and kin, but for all and sundry. I recall how when at the approach of the long winter in Kashmir, the weather suddenly assumed a furious temper, she would feel concerned for the safety of those poor travellers who might be caught unawares by a sudden blizzard while crossing on foot the Pir Panchal Pass between Veri Nag and Banihal.

My grandfather breathed his last at a time before his life could be clouded by the loss of any of his close kin younger to him. Against this, the last years of my grandmother's life were tormented by a number of such almost unbearable tragedies. But she bore these bereavements heroically, and no onset of sorrow could ever dry up the perennial well of love that flowed freely in her heart.

My Parents

One could hardly imagine two such sharply contrasted human beings as my father and mother. My father was clever, wise and practical-minded in dealing with all problems, both of domestic and business categories. On the contrary, my mother was a bundle of emotions and her attitudes and actions were determined most often by her feelings. They got married towards the late autumn of 1900. When I was a child and even till I grew into a young man, I was somewhat in awe of my father and could never think of entering into conversation of a personal nature with him. But, being her eldest child, I was very much on intimate terms with my mother. So I would often ask her to inform me about her early life before she got married into a strange household in a village more than twenty miles distant from her native place - a distance that had a much wider connotation at the start of the present century than one can imagine in the present context of widely-used public motor transport plying over a network of metalled roads that crisscross the Valley of Kashmir. When I inquired from her the approximate date of her wedding, she told me that it was the month of Maghar, almost towards the approach of winter and that about a couple of months later Queen Victoria died. The British Queen, the Empress of India, had reigned over a long span of years and witnessed the highest pinnacles of imperial glory reached by Great

Britain, and her passing away towards the close of January 1901, must have been regarded as a catastrophe by most of her subjects inhabiting vast lands round the globe. No wonder the news of her death reached the remotest villages of Kashmir. My parents in the course of the decades following their marriage raised a large family of six sons and their life partnership covered a stretch of about sixty-three years, till my father died in early December 1963. My mother survived him by about six and a half years and lived up to a ripe old age of eighty five years.

In dealing with his children my father was a strict disciplinarian; so much so, that he would not approve of our indulging even in simple rural games like *guli-danda* or *sata long* (called in Hindi Samandar Tapu) When we grew up, I and my brother, next to me in seniority, would wonder what kind of a childhood he had led and whether he had then indulged in any pranks so common and natural among young kids. No wonder our children in turn, felt a little rebellious when their old grandsire sometimes tried to impose such type of restrictions on their activities. With all this, my father fondly loved all his grandchildren and could lull them to sleep with recitation of various Kashmiri folk songs from his well stocked memory in this regard.

By contrast our mother was extremely indulgent towards us and tended to spoil all of us irrespective of our ages. In fact, such an attitude of hers was extended towards all children whether of relatives or friends or

neighbours. Any kind of harshness, in action or in speech, was totally alien to her nature. In the course of years she came to own quite a small crowd of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She loved them all with uniform fervour and would pooh-pooh any suggestion of restricting the number of children borne by a married couple. She would say, "Those whom God so wills will be born. Why worry?" So far as she was concerned it was literally a case of "the more the merrier!"

I have observed that my father was rather rigid in his ideas of keeping discipline in the family. But though not demonstrative by nature, he- in his own way- loved all his children and much more so his grandchildren. Since his early youth, he had been of immense support to his comparatively easy-going father and served with exemplary devotion both his parents till they passed away. Towards the closing years of life he suffered from the wasting ailment of diabetes. About this time I noticed a wonderful change in his attitude towards life. He who had effectively controlled a big household for about fifty years, now voluntarily withdrew from intervening in the problems of a growing family. Much more surprising was his growing detachment so far as the fate of his body was concerned, while the disease steadily proceeded on its inevitable course. Towards the end he got bed-ridden for only a couple of months. During those days when any one would come to inquire about his health, he would

remark, "What is there to say? I can't become young again. I am now praying for a release. I can't say why my petition is not being considered promptly!" He had lived the life of an ordinary householder, but he was a deeply religious minded person with a firm faith in the ultimate goodness of things. Even so, it was amazing to observe how he had then ceased to have any attachment for his body.

I may here make mention of another remarkable trait of my father. He did not, like most men of his generation, have the benefit of a modern education. He was well grounded in the Persian classics and could read the popular Hindu scriptures in Sanskrit. He was by upbringing what we may call on orthodox conservative Brahmin. But, in the course of years he had somehow acquired a good grasp of the basic tenets of Islam. I remember how on occasions he would correct some modem-educated Muslims of my acquaintance on what Islam stood for. This type of understanding and respectful tolerance of faiths other than one's own is still a rare phenomenon in our society.

After my father passed away, my mother sort of lost interest in living. She too was, like my father, intensely devoted to God, though she could not reach the level of detachment that my father attained towards the close of his days on this earth. She was unlettered but was very

well-versed in our Puranic lore. She was always a frail creature, fair of skin and delicate of features and would take only one solid meal in a day. Now, during the years of widowhood, she would say that when the end came to her, she prayed that she may not have to get bedridden. And her wishes were granted in full measure when, on a lovely April morning, she collapsed into a state of coma, having just finished her ablutions and started to offer her routine prayers. She did not regain consciousness and breathed her last a few hours later.

My Brother's Face

He was about four years younger to me and was named 'Shamboo Nath' at his birth. Of all my brothers, I being the eldest, he was closest to me not only in years but, much more so as far as our many common wavelengths, emotionally and intellectually, were concerned. And yet each human being is a mystery unto himself or herself, howsoever closely associated one might be with others. Hence the words that follow will give but an inadequate portrait of my brother as I came to know him through about seven decades of close association with him.

Among the earliest memories stamped on the tablet of my consciousness is the time and the house where he was born in our modest rural homestead that was finally demolished a few years ago. I was then but a kid myself, but the birth of a younger child gave me the impression of being a somewhat elderly being, while the newborn became "the baby" of the family. I can recall now how pleased I felt at having a younger brother, how I would coax my mother to let me hold him in my arms and, somewhat later, to give him a ride on my back. It was destined that he should precede me in his exit from this world when he was about sixty-nine years of age, and I have regarded it as an unfair irony of fate that I survived him to mourn his loss. I shall never completely outgrow the trauma of this bereavement as long as I live.

In those remote days of the second decade of the present century, there were hardly any facilities for imparting modern education in the rural areas of Kashmir. Our village-cum-town, though it had been for long the headquarters of a subordinate revenue officer and magistrate, could then boast only of a primary school. So it meant a considerable effort on the part of my father to let me go for higher studies, first to the district town of Anantnag and later to the capital city of Srinagar, after I had passed out of the local primary school in the spring of 1919. As a consequence, my brother had to suspend his studies after completing the primary course, for there was need for some one to assist my parents in looking after the problems of a growing family, and those of our landed property and domestic cattle. Somehow even at that stage I felt that this was not fair, and for several years I kept my brother engaged in a sort of self-study, supplemented by my coaching when I came home during my long vacations at school and college. It was thus that Shamboo Nath was enabled to sit for and pass the Matriculation Examination as a private candidate. By that time I had passed my B.A. and had joined a postgraduate course at Lucknow. I then persuaded my father to let the boy join Shri Pratap College at Srinagar for a regular degree course. By the time he had graduated, I was already on a respectable job as a lecturer at the Government College, Jammu. This made it easy for him to proceed to Lucknow for a degree course in law. He passed this easily in 1935.

From 1935 to 1978, Shamboo Nath's activities remained confined mainly to his legal practice at Kulgam and the district courts at Anantnag. From 1950 to 1952 he had a short stint on an official assignments as Chairman, Debt Conciliation Board, Kashmir Province, entrusted with the onerous task of liquidating the burden of the money lenders' dues under which the rural peasantry had been groaning for countless generations. Apart from the various measures of land legislation, this was a very wise and enlightened step taken for the much-needed relief of the rural poor by the newly-established popular government of Jammu and Kashmir . Those who have any close knowledge of this recent chapter of our national rejuvenation will bear out today that, in the discharge of this task, my brother conducted himself with exemplary integrity, fair-mindedness, and efficiency.

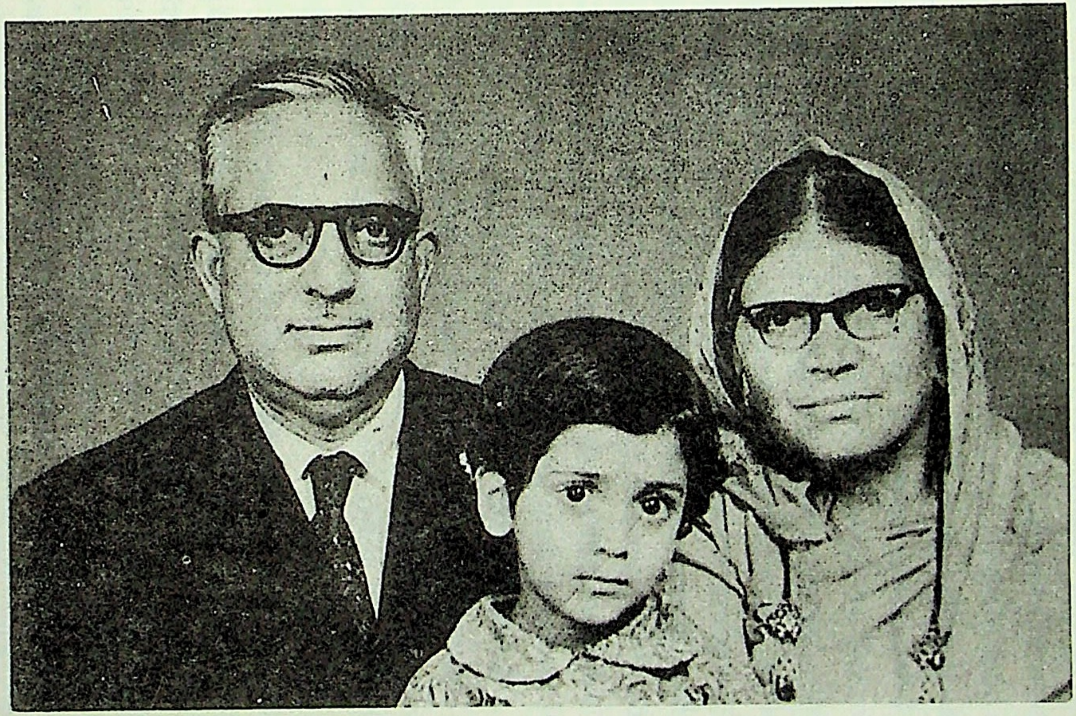
In the course of his long career as a practising lawyer, Shamboo Nath got involved for some years in active politics, as an important office bearer of the District National Conference and as an elected member of its All State General Council. There are still some old political workers alive who recall that he was one of the very few political activists of those days who never sought to gain anything materially for himself or for his children on the basis of his contribution. Later, somewhat disillusioned, he sort of retired from active politics. But, because of his honest and unblemished record, he came to be respected by all the splinter groups and factions into which the National Conference disintegrated in the course of the

years.

As a practicing lawyer, Shamboo Nath set up a record of integrity of which all of us close to him may well feel proud. During his last protracted and incurable illness, many of his clients were willing to get the disposal of their cases delayed indefinitely in the vain hope that he might recover and resume his work at the courts as before. He was highly esteemed by all his professional colleagues at the Kulgam bar. He was for several years President of the local Bar Association; and, after his demise, the members had a portrait of his installed at their premises adjacent to the sub-judge's court at Kulgam.

It is difficult for me to say much about Shamboo Nath as a man and a brother. He was held in high esteem by all our close relatives and he was always ready to offer his help or advice to any one of them in need of either. He was always devoted to me in word and thought and deed, and there is not the least exaggeration in this estimate. So far as my children are concerned, they recall that he was at the least as much fond of them and as much concerned about their well being as I myself.

I dedicate this brief note to the memory of one who is no more and the impression of whose goodness and love I shall fondly cherish as long as I live.



AUTHOR WITH HIS WIFE RADHA RANI & GRAND-DAUGHTER NAINA PANDIT

My Late Life's Partner -for My Children

Dear children, I feel like writing this brief note mainly to record for you what your late mother meant to me and how I miss her presence now. You were no doubt part of her flesh and blood, but I feel that no one close to her knew her so well as I did. When we got married about seventy years back, we had not met even by chance. You see she came from a village where one of my aunts had been married and so she and her family were well known to some of us. In our conservative social milieu of those days early arranged marriages were common, and it was not considered essential that the boy and the girl concerned need meet before the wedding took place. Anyway, I recall that the wedding took place on July 26, 1926, and, according to our lunar Hindi calendar, it was Asarh Chaturdashi Shukla Paksh (bright fortnight), a day that in Kashmir was sacred in dedication to Goddess Jwalamukhi, the Yashta or family deity of our caste and clan.

I was then a college student and tried my utmost to prevent my parents from arranging my marriage so early. In this matter, however, I was easily overruled. I was then just a few months over eighteen years in age and she was a few months below fourteen, not yet an adult female in any sense. Neither of us then understood what marriage meant in all of its implications. But it appears now rather amazing for me to recall that we both felt happy when

we got the first opportunity to be by ourselves. I do not now remember what words we exchanged except that she gave me a clear impression that she loved me. On that occasion there was no sex urge involved on either side, but this first feeling of our complete mutual acceptance persisted till the end.

Through the long period of our married life, she came to have a special place in a large joint family of the old pattern. I was the eldest child of my parents, and they had no daughter of their own; and right till the end of their lives they would tell her that they regarded her more as their daughter than as a daughter-in-law; and I can claim that she adequately fulfilled for them the roles of that ideal. Moreover, as I learnt over the years, while she naturally loved all the children born of her, she had the capacity to extend equal love and care for those members of our large family who were not related to her by blood, for example, my younger brothers and their children. While it was natural for her to love and serve her four daughters-in law – all working women as teachers – she had the capacity and the patience also to look even after her grandchildren when their mothers were not sufficiently free to attend to their requirements. In a fairly large joint household, while she was always mindful of the needs of others, she rarely sought anything for herself in particular. I hope I am not exaggerating if I claim that in her limited sphere she represented to some extent the ideal of a mother-goddess. She was a wonderfully excellent cook, a talent she had somehow bestowed on

the two daugthers born of her.

Yes, on the plane of intellectual pursuits, there was a wide gap between us. But she filled this gap to some extent by her exceptional practical sense and a capacity to run a household unassisted. We ourselves raised a large family, but she was able to handle successfully their social problems from their births to their marriages with hardly any assistance from me except that of providing the funds required in this regard from time to time. In short, she left me entirely free to pursue the ethereal dreamland of books and ideas. True, she was born and brought up in a remote village in Kashmir and did not have the benefits of a formal education. But she was a woman of exceptional self-confidence and on occasions she felt no diffidence about entertaining some eminent persons and even foreign dignitaries who chanced to visit our modest home in Srinagar, Kashmir, during the years of my active academic pursuits. Those who had occasion to see her last long illness would hardly believe that just a decade or so earlier she was able to travel all by herself from New York to Delhi by an Air India flight that proved none too easy because of unfavourable weather conditions then prevaling over Palam Airport, necessitating the diversion of the plane to Bombay for twenty-four hours. I shall always cherish in my consciousness the memory of her appearance, as I watched her from the airport gallery emerge before the customs counter. She stood there, erect, fair and extremely confident of how to deal with the luggage check. I do not know how she managed it, but I

watched with some surprise that the customs officer let her through without insisting on opening any of her bags.

In this context let me mention that, while she was not excessively demonstrative in showing her affection to persons dear to her, at the same time she could bear any blow of fate calmly. She was put to a severe test when we lost in tragic circumstances our very much desired child, our elder daughter in the prime of her life in October, 1982. All around us on that sad occasion noticed with admiration how she bore that blow with exemplary dignity and restraint. In that most tragic crisis of our lives our younger daughter and youngest child came to our rescue like an angel of mercy to lighten the gloom of our sorrow. That was two decade ago. But, as I watched her through the passage of those years, I realized that her health, none too perfect uniformly, started declining steadily after that most grievous bereavement.

During nearly the last year of her life she remained confined to her room because of acute sciatica which, along with other chronic ailments of several years, made it difficult for her to move unassisted even from her bed to the toilet and the bathroom. A worse phase of disability was to follow when she got confined to her bed for the last three weeks of her life till the Divine Power that rules this visible universe released her from her agony. During these months and weeks of her travail we tried our utmost to arrange for her all the available medical aid and service. But the worst phase of her suffering was witnessed by me when she, an exceptionally sensitive person to

cleanliness of her body and her surroundings, had to put up with the unavoidable consequences of remaining confined to her bed for about three weeks. During these months and weeks of her physical disabilities I was throughout by her side and even tried my utmost, in spite of my age, to render her whatever service I could offer. I am not sure whether that was adequate. Moreover , it pains me deeply when I recall that on some occasions I was somewhat cross with her when she was not prepared to follow in the letter and the spirit some of the instructions given to her by her doctors. I hope I may be forgiven by God for these lapses. I am sustained in this faith by the fact that she never lost her complete confidence in my love for her. It may sound incredible but I never for a moment felt any physical revulsion against the inevitable consequences of a steadily-decaying body that had once made its impact on my senses like that of freshly blown flowers. Possibly my deeply-rooted love for her at the last stage had transecended the limitations and taints of mere flesh.

Anantnag : 1919-22

The town of Anantnag is probably as old as recorded history. It is mentioned in Kalhan's *Rajataringini* as an important pilgrim center, because of the sacred spring after which the place takes its name. Also since time immemorial it has been a halting stage for the annual pilgrimage to the holy cave of Amarnath. For centuries it has been the chief town in Southern Kashmir, its administrative importance being second only to that of the metropolitan city of Srinagar. This status appears to have been reinforced and confirmed, when in the seventeenth century it was renamed as "Islamabad" in honour of Islam Khan, the then Mogul Governor of Kashmir, and in the surrounding region the town is more often mentioned as 'Islamabad' in popular parlance in preference to its more ancient name of "Anantnag".

My association with this town goes back to the early years of the present century when I was a school student here for three years, from 1919 to 1922, I had my primary education at the government primary school in my home village of Kulgam. But, in order to pursue my studies further, I had to move to Anantnag, which could then boast of having a government middle school, the only government educational institution of this status in the whole region of Southern Kashmir. I may recall that by the year 1919 the Church Mission Society School here had been raised to the level of a high school affiliated to the

University of Punjab, Lahore. But then neither C.M.S. High School nor the Government Anglo Vernacular Middle School had any arrangements for the teaching of science subjects.

When I joined the sixth class at the middle school here, I had to stay at a government boarding house attached to the school; and during my three-year course I resided throughout at this boarding house. This boarding house was located in a ramshackle rented building about two hundred yards from the town square and on the left side of the road leading to Achhabal and beyond. That building is not there now. Probably it was gutted in a fire some years back, and the road was subsequently widened to provide a two-lane traffic facility. Nevertheless, whenever I now pass along this road, I am emotionally stirred by the memories of those long past years of my boyhood that I had occasion to pass here. The stone building where the Government Middle School was then housed is still standing just across the main road and covers part of the premises of the present M.P. Government Higher Secondary School.

In those remote days life of us resident boys at the boarding house was quite hard by any standards. The kitchen service was at government cost, and no rent was charged for room accommodation. The number of resident boys in my time ranged between thirty and forty souls, and from four to six of us were allotted a room for residence. The only furniture provided comprised tough reed mats for flooring and a wooden box for each of us

for keeping our books and other belongings. There were no bedsteads provided, and we had to spread out our bedding on the floor at night and to roll these up each morning. Each of the boarders was required to pay for his board at the monthly rate of Rs.2/- in cash and about thirty seers of rice in kind. In return for this payment we were provided two rice meals a day supplemented by an indifferently processed vegetable curry. Meat or fish or eggs or fruit were never items of our menus. Any breakfast and afternoon tea were out of the question. Some of us, who could so afford, would supplement this meagre diet by having fruit or an occasional glass of milk from the market out of the pocket money we got from our parents.

As regards our educational pursuits, we used to attend school from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with short breaks for a recess and a mass drill. There were no arrangements for any regular afternoon games. In this respect the C.M.S. School authorities were more enterprising. They would raise regular teams for hockey and football and would in the summer afternoons take some of their pupils to Khanabal, in order to instruct them in swimming and boating over the river. The teachers at our school were not highly qualified by the present-day standards. I remember that in the whole staff of about fifteen teachers there were only two trained graduates. But most of them were very earnest in their jobs and they did not believe in "sparing the rod and spoiling the child". On very rare occasions we were taken on picnics to nearby places of interest, like Achhabal and Mattan and Gautam Nag. The

town then provided no special facilities for recreation. The development of the cinema (it was still the era of silent movies) was unknown to us, and no one then thought of arranging tournaments or athletic contests on the district level. Cheap public motor transport was still not thought of, and the limited number of passengers who had to move between Anantnag and Srinagar would traverse the distance either by what I may call "omni-boat" or by tonga. In those days life moved at a very slow pace, and it is amazing to note what changes in our ways of life have been recorded during the past fifty or sixty years.

As regards the means of eduction available to women in those far off days, it could be no exaggeration to state that these were almost non-existent. I recall that there was a primary school for girls in Anantnag in those days, but this was the only such school in the whole district. Now we have two full-fledged degree colleges, one each for boys and girls in the town; and the countryside around is covered by a large number of high schools and higher secondary schools in which instruction is provided to a large number of boys and girls of the school-going age. Regular bus-services now ply along a network of roads linking the remotest villages with the district towns. When our young men and young women attending colleges and schools today try to understand the great changes that have taken place in our ways of life during the last fifty or sixty years, they may get some idea of how far we have travelled during this comparatively short period of our history. Surely, we may claim that during this interval we have progressed almost from the era of the bullock cart to the modern jet age !

Swami Ranganathananda Maharaj- A Tribute

As most of us may be aware, Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj has succeeded His Holiness Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj as the President of Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the world-wide order of monks with its headquarters at Belur Math in Howrah District of West Bengal. My associations with the Sri Ramakrishna Mission go back to my student days at the University of Lucknow, from 1928 to 1930, through the kindness of one of my teachers, the late Prof. Dayamoy Mitra, who was himself an ardent adherent of the Ramakrishana-Vivekananda Movement. He was an excellent teacher but practically a sadhu and a confirmed bachelor who in those days stayed at the Ramakrishna Mission Centre, then located at Aminabad Park, Lucknow. It was also my sheer good luck that he kindly, through his personal and out-of-class guidance, helped me to achieve a rare distinction in my academic pursuits. Moreover, he also introduced me to the ideals and activities of the great order of monks established by Swami Vivekananda Ji Maharaj about a century ago.

That was way back in 1928-1930. A couple of years later, I started my professional career in what was then called the Prince of Wales College at Jammu, definitely one of the leading institutions for higher studies under

the jurisdiction of the Punjab University, Lahore. Over the years later, I had the opportunities of serving also at the two government colleges in Srinagar till 1956 when I moved over to the University of Jammu and Kashmir campus at Naseem Bagh as the first Head of the Post- Graduate Department of English. I recall that, over the years following, I maintained a regular personal correspondence with Prof. Mitra and always availed of the opportunities of meeting him whenever I visited Lucknow during the fifties and sixties of the present century. I trust the readers may excuse my preliminary introductory references to my own career before I venture to attempt any personal estimate of an exalted personality like Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, who may be easily regarded as one of the most eminent Indian personalities of our time.

As in the case of my most beneficial contacts with my Lucknow-based teacher, it was a case of further good luck for me when I met by appointment Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj in Delhi in January, 1954. Swamiji was then incharge of the Ramakrishna Mission Centre in New Delhi, where he had moved from Karachi in 1948. Those who can recall the New Delhi premises of the Mission then can easily realize that its present physical dimensions and the programmes of functional activities round the year now are the result of Swamiji's rare administrative calibre and enlightened vision over the years he was incharge of the centre. I recall that when I met Swamiji, he was keen to have a regular centre of the

Ashram started in Srinagar. I have also the impression that Dr. Karan Singh ji, then Sadr-i-Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir, had initiated this idea, promised to provide the initial funds for a start and possibly suggested that Swamiji might contact me in this regard.

So the die was cast and Swamiji Maharaj, along with two junior monks from Calcutta, came over to Srinagar in the following summer to get the centre inaugurated.

As for my part, on my return to Srinagar, I consulted late Dr. S.N. Peshin, my life-long friend, one-time college classmate and close neighbour at Karan Nagar, to consider how we could help in getting a centre started. It so chanced that we were easily able to secure on rent, from a Muslim owner, a fairly satisfactory accommodation at Karan Nagar itself for housing the centre. The centre was duly inaugurated by Swamiji himself, with facilities for a modest library-cum-reading room, a lecture room, a charitable medical dispensary, just barely adequate residence and kitchen facilities for the working monks. Following this event, Swamiji Maharaj continued to stay on in Srinagar for quite some time. I now recall, in a humble and nostalgic mood, that during this somewhat longish stay of Swamiji in Srinagar, I came to know him more closely, as he graciously permitted me to join him in his evening walks into the then open country west of my modest residence at Karan Nagar.

During these evening strolls, Swamiji Maharaj narrated to me how he had left his rural home in Kerala

at a very early age, apparently because he did not find himself easily in tune with the rigid caste restrictions and other superstitious practices of his Brahmin Community. As he claimed, he was then vastly ignorant about the world at large and decided to join the Ramakrishna Mission Centre at Mysore as a humble errand boy. He also recalled his experience later as the Secretary of the Mission centre at Yangon, Myanmar, when he was compelled to close his centre and join the arduous trek of thousands of refugees moving across pathless jungle and hill tracks towards India after the Japanese had occupied Yangon in the course of World War II by early 1942. I also recall how, during that arduous trek , Swamiji tried to organize some measures of help and relief for the diseased and disabled trekers by a group of right-minded and physically fit volunteers.

Some of these experiences are recorded in detail in some of Swamiji's vast output of publications-all told, a considerable amount of literary productions on matters both spiritual and temporal. I have been a regular subscriber of *Prabuddha Bharata* for the past 40 years. Moreover, through the perusal of a sizeable number of works brought out under the authorship of Swamiji and after having listened to many of his discourses in Srinagar, Delhi and Calcutta, I have been tremendously impressed by the vast and varied amount of knowledge gathered by Swamiji, not only from our ancient scriptures but also of the wide-ranging information on secular matters unleashed all over the world during the past century on

science, sociology, astronomy, ecology and human psychology. When I most humbly recall that Swamiji ran from his home soon after he had just matriculated, obviously all this achievement is the sheer product of continuing self-eduction.

Swamiji Maharaj is certainly one of the most widely travelled among the Indian dignitaries of our time. I wonder how many among us know that Swamiji made a marked impact in the then fundamentalist Marxist ideology of the orthodox communists of the University of Moscow when he was invited to visit the still intact state of the Soviet Union in the seventies of the present century.

While all those, who have had the good fortune of listening to any of Swamiji's discourses in Delhi, can easily attest to his matchless oratorical skills through the English medium, I wonder how many persons around here know that Swamiji Maharaj, apart from his command over his mother tongue Malayalam, is known as a fluent speaker in Hindi, Bengali and Tamil also. Swamiji Maharaj now deservedly leads an organization known all over the world as a body that has steadfastly retained for a century the ideals of spirituality and unremitting service of the needy and the deprived sections of our society, undiminished in theory and practice. And wonder of wonders, Sri Ramakrishna Mission of devotees and monks has all through drawn into its fold able, dedicated, highly qualified and absolutely self-denying persons for

maintaining and advancing the ideals set forth before it by Swami Vivekananda Ji Maharaj about a century ago.

Swami Ranganathanda ji Maharaj is now the thirteenth head of the Mission, obviously a worthy successor to his predecessors among whom late Swami Bhuteshananda ji Maharaj may be recalled as one of the most distinguished members of the order. It is surely in the fitness of things that the prestigious Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Award is this time being most deservedly awarded to the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Reminiscences of Swami Vivekanada: A Review

It so chances that my associations with the Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement go back to 1928-1930, when I was at the age of 20-22 years a student for a postgraduate course at the University of Lucknow. Since then I have travelled a lot, both mentally and physically, during my long career as a college and a university teacher-at Jammu, Srinagar and Jalandhar-and after formal retirement, as one interested in the working of some well-reputed educational institutions in Srinagar, Kashmir, right upto 1989. Moreover, back in 1978, I had the rare opportunity of getting initiated as a lay devotee of the Ramakrishna Order by Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, late President of the Ramakrishsna Math and Mission.

Through these aforementioned associations, I have had opportunities in the past many years of reading through a wide range of the publications of this international institution founded by Swami Vivekananda about a century ago. But it so transpires that I had recently the first opportunity of reading Advaita Ashram's very interesting and inspiring publication, entitled *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, the first edition being issued around 1960-61, and comprising articles written by men and women, both Indian and foreign, who had known Swamiji in India and abroad before he attained

Maha Nirvana in 1902. I presume it is not necessary to recall here the various stages of the life and career of Swamiji from his birth in 1863 to his unmatched contributions towards conveying the eternal message of India to the West and the subsequent constructive achievements in the foundation of the Ramakrishna Movement both in India and abroad, cover just the last decade of his career. The earlier phases of his activity till his first visits in 1893 to U.S.A. and Europe appear to have been just a preparation for this total and final achievement. The present volume, in fact, presents certain aspects of his outstanding personality with a stress on its basically human characteristics.

Let me now try to put before the readers how the study of this volume of reminiscences has helped me to know and understand better some of the multidimensional but basically human qualities of Swami Vivekananda. Let us start with a reference to a brief note of B.G. Tilak, pages 201-21 of this volume. All of us know that by 1892 Bal Gangadhar Tilak had established his unmatched political status as an outstanding leader of our freedom movement and as a scholar through his learned exposition of the *Bhagavad Gita*. This note, dated "about the year 1892" appears to have been discovered in the archives of the Pune English Weekly, *Kesri*, founded and edited by Tilak for several years. It relates to Tilak's chance meeting with Swamiji at the Bombay Railway Station when he was about to travel to his home town of Pune. It was the parivrajka phase of Swamiji's career when

he was travelling up and down and across India, mostly on foot and seeking shelter & food from the high & the low as a nameless sanyasin. At the Bombay railway station, two Gujarati gentlemen who had come to see off Tilak to Pune, introduced the nameless sanyasin to him with the suggestion that he (Tilak) might have the sanysain - name not mentioned - as a guest for a while at Pune. As this brief note relates, Tilak kept the sanyasin as his guest at Pune for a few days. Next Tilak, who was a member of the Deccan Club, invited the snyasin to a meeting at the club. To quote from Tilak's note : "At this meeting Shri Kashi Nath Govind Nath made a fine speech on a philosophical subject. No one had to say anything. But the Swami rose and spoke in fluent English, presenting the other aspect of the subject very lucidly. Every one there was thus convinced of his high abilities." That was some time in 1892. Then towards the last quarter of 1893, Swamiji suddenly sprang into fame, following his storming of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, U.S.A., next across the Atlantic to U.K. & Europe, till in a few weeks the very soul of India was stirred to its depths, as recorded in the triumphant progress of Swamiji from Colombo to Kanya Kumari, on to Chennai & Calcutta, till he could snatch a brief period of rest & peace at Almora in the backdrop of the eternal Himalayas. Let me now record a footnote to Tilak's note of 1893. On noticing the pictures of the Swamiji in the Indian journals, he recognized his identity as the sanyasin who had been his guest at Pune a few months earlier. So he wrote to Swmaiji

on his Calcutta address, & records in the note that he got a prompt reply confirming his suspicion. Unfortunately, Swamiji's reply could not be traced by Tilak in the archives of *Kesri*. But B.G. Tilak concludes his note by recording that during the next Congress session at Calcutta he visited Belur Math and had a very lively exchange of views with Swami Vivekananda.

It so appears that, possibly in response to requests to persons in India and abroad, the material for this volume was received not strictly in time-bound order, while some of the articles had already appeared from time to time in *Vedanta Kesri* and *Prabuddha Bharata*, right from the twenties to the early sixties of the present century. Also it so chances that most of the very moving writings came from the American ladies who had opportunities to meet Swamiji from 1893 to 1900. Even I felt that these writings, contributed by these ladies, were more emotional in their devotion than those contributed by some scholarly men folk in India and abroad. One such contributor, Reeves Calkins who travelled to India to meet Swamiji in 1900, recalling the unprecedented outstanding impression made by him at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. writes, "I, as a young preacher fresh from the University, did not greatly admire the magnificent ease with which he waived aside Christian history........I was prepared to credit the report that, not his ideals, but his eyes were leading captives silly American women which was manifestly unfair. The mystery of this impression on American women was later explained by Josephine

Macleod in an article published in 1962 by noting, following her visits to India, that "the Indian civilization is based on motherhood, and our civilization is based on wifehood, which makes a tremendous difference". But Mr. Kalkins was by 1923 convinced of the spiritual stature of Swamiji after he met him at Belur Math around 1900-1901. He writes : "One night I participated in a discourse. Vivekananda had been particularly brilliant. His conversation was like Ganga at high flood. There was really no interrupting him". Then he goes on to quote the Swami, "Let England teach us the fine art of government ..... But let no nation presume to teach India religion, for here India shall teach the world."

Let me next record a few estimates of Swamiji's status as recorded by his devotees. These appear to stress the purely human qualities of Swamiji, almost sometimes childlike in their simplicity & informality. In this respect, the record of Mary C. Funke is very interesting and revealing. She & some of her female friends from Detroit had been invited to stay at a sort of holiday home organized by Swamiji in 1894 at the Thousand Island Park with a natural background unmatched in its loveliness and variety, of hills, forest covers, the majestic River Lawrence and a self-sufficing, simple and comfortable dwelling place in a park. The party had not met Swamiji on a personal level before and so they were rather nervous about how they might be received. Says Marry C. Funke, "But he did accept us-he did, the blessed one !.... Even in my wildest dreams I could not imagine anything so

wonderful, so perfect. To be with Vivekananda ! To be accepted by him. His voice wondrously beautiful. And Swamiji's fun-making is of the merry type..... With infinite pains he tried to show us the path he himself had trod..... After thirty-one years Swamiji stands out in my consciousness a colossal figure, this Man of fire and flame, and there were some who received him, and to those who received him he gave power! Such was Vivekananda !"

As most people having even a limited knowledge of the work and ideals of the Rama Krishna Mission are aware, the most ardent English devotee of Swamiji was Miss Margaret Noble, whom Swamiji renamed as Sister Nivedita, and who totally devoted herself to the service of this country till her last breath. She has obviously written much about India and the country's need for educating her women folk. I do not feel inclined to quote from her writings now. I should prefer to quote what Manmatha Nath Ganguli writes about her. Ganguli, it appears, was a highly devoted admirer of Swamiji, and went to meet him at Shri Balram Bose's house in Calcutta where Swamiji was staying on his return from U.S.A. in 1897. Bose had heard of sister Nivedita but had never met her till then. While waiting for interview with Swamiji in Balram Boses hall, this is what he observed : 'I took my seat in a corner of the floor and in a short while there came Miss Noble through one of the hall doors. She wore an overall robe of pale saffron and there was a necklace of holy *rudraksha* beads on her neck. As she entered the room barefooted, she looked as pure as a goddess.....She

went with slow strides to the door adjoining the room in which Swamiji was resting but then she knelt down beside the door frame and folded her hands; her fingers and palms joined to offer her obeisance to the Lord. She bowed down in this posture & then remained on her ankles with joined palms as we do while sitting on a cot. Swamiji talked with her for a while, and she also answered in a soft voice reverentially as if she was in a church. Then again she bowed down to the Swami and went away as silently as she had come.....I had heard a lot about Sister Nivedita but this was the first time that I saw her in person. Her face had a serenity and a fullness that one sees in the face of Madona, indicating a direct vision of God."

I should like to conclude with a few interesting extracts from the record of Swami Sadashivananda who was in 1898 as a youngman, staying in Varanasi. He had got interested in the work and ideals of the Rama Krishna Mission & was fully aware of the worldwide renown of Swami Vivekananda following his first visit to U.S.A. in 1893. He was most devoutly seeking to meet Swami Vivekananda, who was by then back in India. One day, in September, 1898, he came to know that Swamiji was due to arrive in Varanasi for a change. It so chanced that preparations for establishing the Rama Krishna Mission Home of Service at Varanasi were already going ahead; & the youths of the projected home of Service selected Swami Sadashivananda to receive Swami Vivekananda at the railway station. When Swami Sadashivananda

received Swamiji, he put the garland at his feet & recalls, "Then I looked up & saw full at his face; and suddenly I remembered the face, already very familiar to me in my dreams!"

It so transpired that Swamiji was by that time in an acute stage of declining health. He was aware of this & remarked to Swami Sadashivananda during this visit to Varanasi, "This is a shattered body. How long can you keep it going? And supposing this body is no more, Nivedita, Ihashi (later Swami Ramakrishnananda) and others will obey me. They will die in harness and can never falter in carrying out my instructions. They are my only hope. "Swami Sadashivananda concludes," We were young and inexperienced. But we could understand his love. It was not of this world. Whoever has seen a man who could love and who came to teach love to the world! How many youths have renounced everything to join the order of monks only because of this divine love of the Swami."

There are worlds beyond the stars.
and there is many a test of love
Which has yet to be undergone.

*

It is love which causes the ups and
downs in human life.
It is love which brings about the high
notes and low notes in music divine.

(Translation of Dr. Iqabal's well-known verses)
From Patrika, New Delhi

SECTION

II

Kashmir Past & Present

Some Salient Aspects of Kashmir History

It is obvious that the Valley of Kashmir has since the very dawn of history enjoyed a special geo-political position in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. According to the *Nilamat Purana,* the distinctive scripture of the Indo Aryan settlers in the Valley, this region was once a vast inland sea stretching from the Pir Panchal to the Haramukh mountain ranges. This semi-mythological belief has been confirmed by modern geological studies of the region.

Apparently, some natural catastrophic eruption opened up the mountain gorge beyond Baramulla, causing the vast primordial lake to be drained out into plains of the Punjab. In course of time what was the bottom of this lake dried up and became a convenient habitat for homo-sapiens. Recent archeological excavations carried out at Burzahama above the eastern bank of the Dal Lake, have revealed a state of human evolution possibly very much more ancient than the pre-Aryan Indus Valley civilization.

Coming down to more recent eras of recorded history, it may be noted that while Kashmir became, from time to time, a part of North Indian empires, it has retained for far longer stretches of time an independent status as a kingdom under Hindu and Muslim rulers. In this context the names of two great rulers deserve special attention. First, there is Lalitatditya (724-760 A.D.) who was not only a great military genius but also an outstanding administrator. He extended his sway not only

over large parts of the Indo-gangetic plain but also carried his conquests towards the north beyond the stupendous mountain barriers that separate Kashmir from Central Asia. For our times his greatness is enshrined in the glorious ruins of the Martand Temple still standing erect in all its majesty over the plateau above the Hindu pilgrimage centre of Mattan. No less memorable are the achievements of Zain-ul-Abidin (1422-1427 A.D.), popularly called Bad Shah (the Great King) by Kashmiris. The impress of his constructive genius is still revealed by the many places named after him and the irrigation canals built at his initiative all over the Valley. Moreover, he anticipated the great Akbar by a century through his secular outlook, by his love of learning and the arts, and by his religious tolerance. Verily, Zain-ul-Abidin may be regarded as the father of Kashmiri nationalism. All Kashmiris today are fully justified in taking pride in the achievements of these two great rulers of Kashmir.

Culturally speaking, Kashmir has undoubtedly been through the centuries linked firmly with the mainstream of Indian thinking and Indian way of life. This region has, at the same time, retained through the ages close affinities with the trans-Himalayan regions of Central Asia. Kashmiri music, Kashmiri architecture, and Kashmiri language itself have absorbed and retained indissoluble links with the Northern regions lying beyond the Karakuram and the Pamirs.

Next, when we consider the development of religious ideas and religious practices in Kashmir, we are confronted with a picture in many ways distinct from

what we see in regions close towards both our Southern and Northern borders. Kashmir was no doubt in ancient times a centre of Hindu religion as practised in the Vedic period. Later it became an important focal point of Buddhism. Most probably the Hindu caste system substantially disintergated here through the impact of Buddhism. Later on, the lower classes obviously got converted almost wholesale to Islam, with the result that the only Hindus that stuck fast to their ancient religion were a handful of Brahmins-a phenomenon almost unparalleled in any other part of India. But this small community of Brahmins evolved, in course of time, a unique religious philosophy, known as *Trika* or *Kashmir Saivism*. Finally, the forceful impact of Islam has left an indelible impress on the socio-religious atmosphere of this land. It is interesting to recall here that the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir, Rinchen Shah, was a convert and not an invader. In course of time, there came on the scene some Muslim rulers who no doubt persecuted their Hindu subjects. But, on the whole, the large-scale conversions to Islam from among the poorer and exploited sections of society appear to have been peaceful.

It is worthly of note to mention here that Islam itself got modified to some extent in this land by many pre-Islamic traditions, and more so by the influence of Sufi mystics. The late fourteenth century saw the emergence of two mystic saints, a Hindu and a Muslim, who are venerated equally down to this day by both Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir and whose utterances have become an invaluable cultural heritage of all Kashmiris. First,

there appeared on the scene Laleshwari or Lal Ded (Mother Lala), as she is popularly called. She was an inspired soul whose early religious training appears to have been moulded largely by Saivite philosophy in language and imagery easily understood by even the illiterate sections of the people. Soon after came Nund Rishi, better known as Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, whose mortal remains lie buried in a tomb at Chrar-i-Sharif, a shrine that has been a popular place of pilgrimage for more than five centuries past. There is a tradition that this great Kashmiri saint was physically a cripple and had to be carried in a litter from place to place by his devotees. He was greatly influenced by Sufism and, as in the case of Laleshwari, his sayings too have become a valued treasure for both the learned few and also the mass of common folk. And, in like manner, his atterances and his name are venerated by the Hindus as well as Muslims of Kashmir. Thus we see that these two cultural trends of Hindu Saivism and Muslim Sufism seem to have achieved a lovely integration in the lives and utterances of Lal Ded and Sheikh-ul-Alam.

When we consider these several outstanding aspects of historical evolution in Kashmir, we may conclude that communal harmony and religious toleration, on which Kashmiris may in our times rightly pride themselves, are a matter of historical growth stamping our identity as a people. Let us bear it in mind that it would be a sad day indeed in our history, if we at any time lose sight of this noble national heritage.

Kashmir as They Saw Her

Since the very dawn of history the Valley of Kashmir has been one of the most celebrated regions among the inhabited areas of our planet. Its special importance has been recorded by historians and travellers, and its scenic beauty has been esxtolled in prose and verse. In his immortal verse Kalidas mentions Kashmir as the land famous for its natural beauty, its salubrious climate, the loveliness of its women, and its special and very rare produce, called saffron.

In ancient times seekers after light and learning were drawn to its confines from distant regions of the Far East and West Asia. That was centuries ago. Even in later times, when Kashmir had ceased to be one of the great centres of learning in Asia, European travellers were attracted to it by the fame of its natural beauty and the excellence of its crafts and manufactures. Among the first such Western travellers to visit the land and to record his impressions of life here was a French physician, named Francois Bernier. Bernier came here over the old Moghul Road in the train of Emperor Aurangzeb around the year 1665 A.D. and in his famous *Travels* he gave a detailed account of his journey from Delhi to Srinagar across the Pir Panchal Range. And Kashmir did not disappoint Bernier, for he called it "the Paradise of the Indies". Also he was struck by the unsurpassed beauty of Kashmir shawls and other manufactures in metal and woodwork.

Bernier was followed by many other well known European travellers down to our own times, and they wrote glowing accounts of the Valley. Among these may be mentioned Hippolyte Desiderian, an Italian Jesuit Priest who reached Srinagar in November, 1714 A.D. In 1783 A.D. an Englishman, by name Forster, an officer of the Bengal Army of the East India Company travelled from India to St. Petersburgh. While on this journey, he passed through Kashmir and left an account of the then conditions prevailing here. By this time the Moghul power had declined and Kashmir had come under Afghan rule, resulting in considerable degeneration in the living conditions of the people and in the quality of their world-famous handicrafts.

Next, an interesting visitor to the valley was Vigne. He arrived in Bombay in 1833 and travelled extensively in the Punjab before entering the Valley through Jammu. At the latter place he met Raja Gulab Singh, who was at that time a feudatory chief under Ranjit Singh, the then redoubtable Sikh ruler of the Punjab. In 1842 A.D. Vigne published a memorable book, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh, Iskardo.* Kashmir was then part of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's dominion, and it was not long before Gulab Singh was to acquire it when the Sikh empire collapsed under the British onslaught soon after the death of Ranjit Singh. From Jammu Vigne passed on to the Valley and found the living conditions of the people in utter decline. In spite of its vast natural resources and its fertile soil, as he wrote, earthquakes, famine, cholera and the tyrranny of the

Afghan and Sikh rulers had combined to reduce the mass of the population to dire straits. And yet at one point Vigne makes an interesting observation on the potentialities lying dormant in the natural wealth of the Valley and the congenital talents of its sons and daughters: "Kashmir can become the focus of Asiatic civilization, a miniature England in the heart of Asia."

In times much closer to our own, discerning foreign visitors and administrators have published valuable books on Kashmir. Among these special mention may be made of Sir Walter Lawrence and Sir Francis Younghusband. Lawrence was a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, and about a hundred years ago his services were requisitioned by Maharaja Pratap Singh for organizing the first modern revenue settlement in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Lawrences' *Valley of Kashmir* published in 1985 A.D. gives an objective and faithful account of life here about a century ago, and this volume can provide quite valuable reading matter even to those who administer the state today. Younghusband, one of the greatest travellers and explorers of Central Asia, first visited Kashmir in 1887 and later functioned as Political Resident there for some years. In his book, *Kashmir*, he gives a colourful account of various beauty spots and places of archaeological interest visited by him in the Valley and beyond Zojila Pass, called the "gateway to Central Asia".

In the context of this very brief survey of how some foreign visitors and observers reacted to the beauty of

Kashmir, it would appear appropriate to conclude with a few references to how some distinguished persons were inspired to poetic utterances by the well known attractive features of this land. It is widely known that Emperor Jehangir composed the following couplet when he felt enraptured by the scenic beauty of this valley :-

If there is a heaven on earth,
It is here, it is here.

Before Jehangir, however, it was Fyzee, a highly learned and distinguished member at Emperor Akbar's Court, who exclaimed :-

A thousand caravans of desire
are on the move every night,
so that all this load of enjoyment
may find fulfilment in the realm of Kashmir.

Still earlier, it appears that the reputation of the physical beauty of the people of Kashmir had travelled to Iran at least as early as in the time of Iran's celebrated poet, Hafiz of Shiraz, for he says :-

They sing and they dance to the tune of Hafiz's verses,

The dark-eyed Kashmiris
and the Turks of Samar-kand.

So far as European literature is concerned, the fame of Kashmir's unique scenic beauty appears to have become widely publicized following the publication of Bernier's *Travels* in the late seventeenth century. Strangely enough, the spell of Kashmir's loveliness appears to have held thrall a number of English poets who themselves never set their feet in these regions. Early in the nineteenth

century Thomas Moore located the main scenes of his famous verse tale, *Lalla Rookh,* in the Valley. At one point in this long poem, Moore bursts forth into the following rhapsody :-

Who has not heard of the Vale of Kashmir ?
With its roses, the brightest that earth ever gave,
Its temples, and grottos, and fountains as clear,
As the love-lighted eyes that hang over their wave. ?

Also Percy Byshe Shelley, the famous contemporary of Thomas Moore, appears to have been fascinated by the far-famed beauty of this "paradise on earth." In his poem *Alastor,* the lonely wandering poet of that name reaches the climax of his long quest for ideal beauty in this very mountain Valley. To quote :-

"Till in the Vale of Cashmire,
Far within its loneliest dell, where odorous
Plants entoine beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
His languid limbs..............."

In our own times many foreign writers have woven their themes, political, fictional and pseudo-historical round the mountains, lakes, rivers, and dales of this land of Nature's enchantment. It may not, however, be possible to exhaust this theme in a brief article.

J & K before August 15, 1947

It is obvious that the future of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet, even after a lapse of more than five decades following the political independence of the Indian sub-continent, stabilized as an integral unit of the Indian Union. For one, about one-third of the total area of the state is still under the occupation of Pakistan, which has not till date formally withdrawn its claim to the whole state because of the Muslim majority of its population. In the state itself, especially in the Valley of Kashmir, quite a vocal section of its Muslim population has not reconciled itself to the State's accession to India. In short, the future of this region continues to pose intractable and complex problems for the Governments of India and Pakistan as also for the several million people of the state involved in this tangle. I wonder how many out of every so-called literate and newspaper-reading public can adequately realize all the factors of complexity inherent in locating its future set-up, right from the time when it was decided in 1947 to partition India into two independent sovereign principalities, the sort of complications not present in the situations then prevailing in any of the odd five hundred semi-autonomous princely states of India. Since the problem has been beset over the decades by many complications, it might help to go back in time to understand the situation as it obtained about the middle of 1947.

It might be recalled that when in the fateful summer of 1947 the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act providing for the withdrawal of the British authority over the sub-continent. So far as the directly ruled British Indian provinces were concerned, power naturally devolved in them upon their duly-elected legislatures, while the central sovereignty was invested in the split sections of the indirectly elected constitution-making body, representing the two newly-constituted dominions of India and Pakistan. Moreover, the Independence Act, while abrogating all the treaties arrived at by the British authorities with the rulers of these princely states, provided further that each ruler of a princely state could legally exercise any of the three options of acceding to either of the two newly-constituted dominions or remaining independent. Through compulsions of geography and the democratic urges of their subjects, most of these hitherto autocratic and dynastic rulers had little choice but to join the dominion within whose geographical boundaries their territories were located. As a result, practically all, except three of these rulers, took their decisions of joining either of the two dominions well before the deadline of August 15, 1947. The three rulers who failed to do so were Nizam Usman Ali of Hyderabad, Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir and the Nawab of Junagadh, whose state lay within the boundaries of what is now the State of Gujrat in the Indian Union.

Students of our recent history are apt to be misled

to some extent by the oft-repeated premise that the country was divided on what are called religious lines. It maybe recalled that the movement for Pakistan was led by Quaid-i-Azam Mohmmad Ali Jinnah (from 1940 to 1947) on the questionable assumption that the Hindus and Muslims of India constituted two separate nationalities who could not live together in peace. Let it be remembered that the Indian National Congress never accepted this principle, for right till the summer of 1947 there was a duly elected Congress Government functioning in the overwhelming Muslim majority state of North-West Frontier Province, under the leadership of Doctor Khan Sahib, while in Jammu and Kashmir the movement against princely autocracy was being led by the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and that this party had at no stage accepted the two-nation theory that led to the partition of the country. Nevertheless, the Congress Party had to accept the partition of the country in view of the chain reactions of communal riotings following the Great Calcutta Killing let loose in August 1946 by a Muslim League Government of United Bengal under Shahid Suhrawardy. By the summer of 1947 the Hindu-Muslim antagonism had been raised to such a fever pitch all over North India that the normal administration in this large belt was on the verge of collapse. Surely, it is not fair to lay the whole blame for this tragedy only on Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League. Possibly if the Congress and the Muslim League had been able in the early forties, in spite

of the wily machinations of the imperial rulers, to come to a firm understanding over a peaceful way of evolving a sort of workable confederation between the Muslim majority and the Hindu majority regions of the country, the tragedy of the blood-soaked partition of 1947 might have been averted. Anyway, it is not possible to dwell here in detail on what happened and what might have been.

Let us turn back to the question of the three princely rulers that failed to make up their minds by August 15, 1947. The offer of accession of Nawab of Junagadh to Pakistan in September 1947 was an irresponsible act of the ruler, and it subsequently proved to be a great blunder on the part of the then rulers of Pakistan to accept this offer. About Hyderabad it is usually assumed that this State provided a sort of close parallel to Jammu and Kashmir in as-much-as here was a predominantly Hindu population governed by a Muslim ruler, while a predominantly Muslim State of Jammu and Kashmir was under the autocratic rule of a hereditary Hindu ruler of the Dogra clan of Jammu. But this simple parallelism does not help in understanding the complexities of Jammu and Kashmir.

First, a close look at the map of Jammu and Kashmir as it stood in 1947 will easily reveal certain distinct features which rendered this state unique among all the princely states that functioned under the overall protecting suzerainty of the British paramount power in India. First, in the sheer size of its area, if not in the

strength of its population, it was easily the largest such State in the British Indian Empire. Moreover, its frontiers touched Tibet in the East & Chinese Turkistan in the North while around Gilgit its jurisdiction was within hailing distance of U.S.S.R. Quite rightly, therefore, till towards the early years of the present century, this strategic spot was designated as the place "where the three empires met." The partition of 1947 added a new dimension to these features for while its Western and Southern frontiers were largely covered by the territory of Pakistan, it continued to have a viable link with India via Pathankot in the Gurdaspur District of East Punjab.

Next, a look at the demographic composition of the State can further highlight the complexities involved in the total entity of this region. While the province of Jammu was a Hindu majority area with close geographical and ethnic links with the land of the Dogras (now part of the Himachal Pradesh), the Valley of Kashmir was overwhelmingly Muslim. As for the Northern Frontier region, it was divided between the Buddhist Ladakh and the North-Western Muslim belt having linguistic and ethnic affiliations with the Dardic tribes inhabiting beyond the Karakoram Ranges in Central Asia.

To add to this jigsaw puzzle of the State, it may be recalled that most of the areas now under the occupation of Pakistan were inhabited largely by Punjabi-speaking Muslims, large numbers of whom, particularly from the Poonch Jagir, were employed in the undivided armed forces of British India. Obviously, after the partition of

the country in 1947, these tough fighting people could not easily be absorbed in the Indian State, just as the equally tough fighting clans of the Dogra region could not be assimilated into the newly-formed Pakistan Dominion.

Some of the facts noted above should make it easy for any objective student of recent history to concede that, in all these respects, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir bore no comparison to the State of Hyderabad. The latter was completely enclosed by the territory of the new Indian Dominion, while its armed forces were largely composed of Muslims recruited from regions outside the State. Nor did the population of Hyderabad provide in any viable strength similar ethnic, religious or linguistic variations.

Historically speaking, the State of Jammu and Kashmir as established by the Treaty of Amritsar concluded between the East India Company and Maharaja Ghulab Singh of Jammu in 1846 was the result partly of the expansionist drives of Maharaja Ghulab Singh towards North and East and receiving a final crystalization through the disintegration of the empire built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, soon after the latter's demise. Even so one cannot be sure if this vast area ruled by the Jammu Dogras could have lasted intact a hundred years (1846-1947) but for the powerful protecting umbrella of the British imperial might.

In the light of all these above noted factors, possibly the most rational solution of the problem of Jammu and

Kashmir in 1947 would have been to convert it into a democratically organized buffer State between India and Pakistan, with its autonomy guaranteed by both the new dominions. But, in the surcharged sectarian split of 1947 all over North India, it was impossible to arrive at such a statesman-like understanding between the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League. Most unfortunately, human history is often shaped by irrational passions of fear and hate and suspicion rather than by considerations of the well-being of the masses of common people.

from "Kashmir Times"

Jammu

The Kashmir Problem- 1946-47

(Those Fate Laden Months, June to October 1947)

By February, 1947, it was clear that the Viceroy Lord Wavell had failed to bring about an agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League on the basis of accepting in toto the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, after Mohammed Ali Jinnah had tricked the Viceroy into the inclusion of the Muslim League nominees in the Interim Central Cabinet, with Jawaharlal Nehru as Vice-President. The British Labour Government regarded this as a failure of the well-meaning soldier Viceroy and decided to replace him by Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, a close relative of the British royal family, who had distinguished himself as the dynamic and successful Supreme Allied Commander in the Far East towards the closing phase of World War II.

Mountbatten was given a free hand to deal speedily with the Indian situation which was deteriorating rapidly with the two hostile sections of the Interim Central Government functioning at cross purposes and the spread of communal violence all over North India. Mountbatten assumed control of his difficult and onerous job in March, 1947, and lost no time in contacting the representatives of all political parties and other eminent persons and experts who could help by making valuable and feasible suggestions for resolving the deadlock. By the middle of May, 1947, he came to the conclusion that in the then

atmosphere, surcharged with relentless violence, it was not possible to hold together the subcontinent as one integral entity. The result of his recommendations to the authorities in London was the famous June 3 announcement that paved the way for the creation of a separate Muslim Majority State in the North-West and the East.

As mentioned earlier, the hastily conceived and speedily adopted Indian Independence Act by the British Parliament left the several hundred princely rulers free to choose out of any three alternatives of independence, or accession to either India or to Pakistan. At this most crucial juncture in the history of Jammu and Kashmir it would appear to place on record the contrasted attitudes of the Congress and the Muslim League towards the future alignement of these numerous autocratic islands (big and tiny) within the total domain of the British Indian Empire. While the attitude of the Congress was clear that the future set-up in all these principalities should be decided in accordance with the aspirations of the people residing in them, the Muslim League leaders, obviously with their tongues in their cheeks, proclaimed from housetops, right up to the end of July 1947, that each of these princely despots could exercise his choice as he liked, strictly in accordance with the letter of the law as enacted by the British Parliament in this regard. In the opinion of all honest observers of our recent history this was a cardinal error of policy adopted and pursued by the prospective rulers of Pakistan.

As regards the policy of the Congress Party on this

crucial issue, It may be conceded that because of the tremendous popular influence of a secular party like the National Conference functioning in Jammu and Kashmir, the Congress might have staked a claim on this State. Unfortunately, most of the leaders of this party had been detained or suppressed since the summer of 1946, following the "Quit Kashmir" movement led by Sheikh Abdullah, who had been in consequence sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. The Congress leadership was, in consequence, interested more in the release of these leaders rather than in winning over the Maharaja by playing the Hindu card. For this purpose, first Lord Mountbatten and later Mahatma Gandhi visited Kashmir, From all authentic and irrefutable records since available, Moutbatten advised the Maharaja in strong terms to make up his mind about acceding to either Pakistan or India while keeping in view the urges of the vast majority of his subjects and not to opt for an illusory and impracticable independence. Later, Gandhiji arrived here on the first of August, 1947, from Rawalpandi, stayed in Srinagar for a couple of days and left back by road via Jammu from where he proceeded straight to Calcutta where, following independence, instead of joining any celebrations, he sought successfully to checkmate the communal Hindu backlash following the departure of most of the Muslim League provincial rulers to the newly-emerged domain of East Pakistan. It was a unique demonstration of the miracle of spiritual power which Lord Mountbatten later designated as "the one-man

boundary force" in contrast with the utter failure of the four division armed force that had been deployed along the dividing line across the Panjab to prevent communal violence on either side of the new border. During his brief stay in Srinagar, Gandhi met the political leaders not then under detention. Apart from two evening prayer meetings, he did not address any political gathering. He had, however, a fairly long private meeting with the Maharaja at the latter's request. But there is no authentic record as to what passed between the two, except a surmise that he warned the Maharaja that he should keep in view the approval of his subjects for whatever decision he took. On his journey out from Jammu, he, however, made a memorable press statement to the effect that the future of the State had better be decided through an understanding among the four parties involved, namely India, Pakistan, the ruler and the people of the State. Strangely enough, basically this estimate holds good even today, though one of the parties, the Maharaja , is now altogether out of the picture.

As we know, Maharaja Hari Singh, even after the advice tendered to him by Moutbatten and Gandhi took no decision on the issue of accession by August 15. Instead, he offered to have stand-still arrangements with both Pakistan and India on the problems relating to communications and movement of essential supplies. While Pakistan immediately accepted such an arrangement, in actual practice they put the State under an undeclared siege by stopping movement of all supplies

of petrol, diesel and other essential goods into its territory. India, on the other had, made at the time no positive response to the Maharaja's offer. It is, however, on record that Sardar Vallabh-bhai Patel, the Indian Home Minister, assured the ruler that India would not create any difficulties for the Maharaja's Government in case he opted for joining Pakistan. Moreover, it is also on record that the three service Chiefs of India (all Britishers at that time) testified for the United Nations Security Council that the Government of India had not at any stage considered a plan for 'sending its armed units into the State prior to the crisis precipitated by the tribal invasion of the Sate, abetted and supported by Pakistan authorities, towards the last week of October. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah has in his autobiography mentioned that when he met President Ayub Khan of Pakistan in Rawalpindi in May, 1964, the latter admitted that this was a blunder for which Abdul Qayum Khan, then Chief Minster of the N.W.F. Province, was mainly responsible. All dispassionate observers of current history will concede that this gamble, apart from the earlier dubious attitude of the Muslim League leaders towards the future of the princely states, further added to the innate complications involved in deciding the future set-up of Jammu and Kashmir. In the meanwhile, the territories of the State, including the Jammu region, continued to remain an oasis of peace contiguous to the raging fires of unprecedented communal strife enveloping the whole of Panjab. In fact, till about the middle of September large numbers of fleeing and terror-stricken refugees, both Muslim and Hindu-Sikh, found both refuge, and safe passage towards

security around Jammu. Then right in September some new problems surfaced leading to further bloody consequences. When the Maharaja paid a visit to the Poonch Jagir, large masses of local Muslim soldiers and ex-soldiers faced him with loud demonstrations expressing their desire for joining Pakistan. Unfortunately, when these demonstrations, peaceful to begin with, were dealt with fierce repression by the armed units of the Jammu and Kashmir forces, the situation took the form of an armed popular revolt, thus providing some dubious excuse for intervention by Pakistan.

Obviously, the agitation in Poonch took a communal shape which spilled over to the southern Muslim-dominated district of Mirpur. Consequently, right about the middle of October, when hoards of hapless Hindu-Sikh refugees started rushing towards Jammu and other Hindu-dominated areas of the Province, their arrival let loose a veritable reign of terror against the Muslim minority around Jammu, Kathua, Riasi and Udhampur districts. This anti-Muslim fury reached a crescendo following the unleashing of the tribal invasion into the Valley of Kashmir. In fact, quite a large number of Muslim refugees, men and women and children, braved the crossing of the snow-covered passes across the Pir Panchal range in search of security in the villages and towns of Southern Kashmir. Today and for ages to come, all Kashmiris, particularly so the members of the dominant Muslim community of the Valley, can rightly recall with pride that their mountain-girt homeland remained throughout those critical months a haven of peace and communal amity, where both the Muslim refugees fleeing

from the Jammu region and the Hindu-Sikh sufferers striving to escape the devastation spread over the areas overrun by the tribal hordes, found shelter, relief and sympathy in their midst. No wonder that Mahatma Gandhi in one of his well-known utterances at a prayer meeting about that time expressed that in the Valley he beheld a hope-laden ray of light in the midst of the surrounding gloom then enveloping the whole of North India from Peshawar to Chittagong.

It is a fact of history that the accession of the State to India was precipitated towards the close of October 1947 by the ruthless tribal invasion of Kashmir sponsored and directed by several high-placed leaders of Pakistan. This was followed by the hastily-improvised dispatch of Indian armed forces into the State territories, both by air and along the then precarious fair weather road link between Pathankot and Jammu. It may be stressed here that in sheer legal terms, this accession was final and unconditional. Only in a supplementary letter addressed by the Governor General of India to the ruler of the State, it was mentioned that, "after the whole State had been cleared of all invaders", the Government of India would be willing to seek a ratification of the accession by a reference to the people of the State. The rest of the story is just recent history, and by the numerous errors of policy and administration committed over the years by the authorities in Delhi and Srinagar, the eruption of the current militancy and the political alienation of the Kashmir Valley might not have surfaced in its current virulent and violent forms.

from Koshur Samachar

New Delhi

Countdown to Independence

(August 15,1947, in Srinagar)

For the information of our younger readers, I may claim that I have had occasions to watch sensitively the inexorable march of history in India and the world since my student days in Lucknow from 1928 to 1930. In the fate-laden summer of 1947, most of us in Kashmir were in a state of tension and uncertainty, especially so after the British imperial power had announced by early June its firm decision to divide and quit the subcontinent by August 15, 1947. Our vital communications were still functioning through Rawalpindi, the Maharaja was dreaming of independence, while the still hidden forces aimed at the disruption of Jammu and Kashmir were being mobilized under the tutelage of some anti-Congress British officers then functioning in the North-West Frontier Province of undivided India.

Following the "Quite Kashmir" movement of 1946, unleashed by the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, most of the top leaders of this party were still in detention. Unfortunately, quite a sizeable number of the Kashmiri Pandit community appeared to be blissfully secure under the protecting power of Maharaja Hari Singh and his Kashmiri Pandit Prime Minster, Ram Chandar Kak, a fairly competent and honest administrator but woefully inadequate to counter the continuing sinister machinations of the British Political

Department to split India into a hundred internally warring units.

But before I try to reminisce over my memories of the day of our " tryst with destiny", let me briefly recall a few events that left their impact on the later developments of our tortured course of history during the past 50 years. First, towards the middle of July 1947, Lord Mountbatten, still Viceroy and Governor-General of undivided India, paid a short visit to Srinagar. Later authentic accounts of this visit reveal that he advised the Maharaja to take a speedy decision of acceding to either India or Pakistan and to drop the idea of pursuing the mirage of independence. Further, as revealed later, when Mountbatten sought to have a more detailed discussion with the Maharaja on this vital issue on the morning of his departure for New Delhi, the Maharja avoided a meeting on grounds of sudden ill-health.

Next, there was the memorable visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Srinagar. He arrived by road from Rawalpindi on August 1, 1947, and stayed as the guest of the National Conference in a spacious bungalow arranged for him at Barzulla, a posh suburb West of Srinagar. During his three-day stay in Srinagar, he met lots of people privately but he did not address any public meeting or any press conference. Yes, he held two afternoon prayer meetings at his residential premises but these were limited to recitations from the scriptures, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Christian. I recall that I managed to attend both these prayer meeting along with my wife and all my children.

In his private talks, he was frank and forthright. And when some political workers suggested that he should meet the Maharaja, he observed that while he would not on his own seek a meeting with the Dogra ruler, he would like to meet him if Hari Singh so desired.

Ultimately, a meeting with the Maharaja did take place on the day before Gandhiji's departure by road to Jammu. From all we then knew of this meeting is that the Maharaja Sahib received the Mahatma with profound courtesy and then sat with him on the palace lawns along with Maharani Tara Devi and their stripling son, Yuvaraj Karan Singh, then less than 17 years old. There is no authentic record of this meeting. But in the context of this momentous period, I may mention that after the Gilgit military base was formally handed over to the Maharaja on August 1, it was forcibly taken over by the Gilgit Scouts, a force raised by the British officers during its occupation since 1935. They overpowered the small Dogra garrison, imprisoned Governor Gansara Singh and declared accession to Pakistan a few days before August 15, 1947. As an interesting footnote to this coup, it is now widely known that most of the Gilgit people, largely Muslims of the Shia sect, are now rueing this hasty step. Again, it may be noted that on August 11, Maharja Hari Singh dispensed with the services of Pandit Ram Chandar Kak and appointed General Janak Singh in his place as a provisional measure. Gen. Janak Singh was related to the Maharaja, and had put in a lengthy term of distinguished and honest service to the State, both in the J & K Army and in the civil administration.

As we know, Mahatma Gandhi undertook a long journey by rail from Jammu to Calcutta and took no part in the celebrations of Indian Independence anywhere. Rather, in Calcutta, he engaged himself from August 15 onwards in subduing the resurgence of sectarian violence through his usual technique of seeking shelter in a Muslim house abandoned by its owner and by resorting to an indefinite fast. In this mission, he achieved considerable success, so that Lord Mountbatten called him "a one-man boundary force" as against the futile mobilization of four army divisions to guard the border between the two sections of the truncated, rich and prosperous province of Punjab.

Having thus cleared the background in Jammu and Kashmir preceding the historic date of August 15, 1947, let me attempt to recapture briefly how we passed that memorable day in Srinagar. Yes, most members of our small minority community felt happy at this dawn of freedom in the subcontinent. My children stitched a few small-sized tricolour flags and pinned these to our window frames. Hardly any of us could then clearly foresee later bloody events just two months away. Believe it or not, there were no official flag hoistings, no public meetings of any kind, except for indoor meetings at two private schools. But the city was absolutely quiet and peaceful. Going round the streets, one could notice three distinct types of flags hoisted over a large number of private houses. Most of these flags of scarlet colour bearing the white emblem of the plough, which had been

adopted in 1939 as the official flag of the secular Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, were widely displayed all over the city. There were a much smaller number of Muslim League flags hoisted over the comparatively small pockets of the adherents of the Muslim Conference, confined then only to a section of population in downtown Srinagar.

As for the areas in the posh civil lines around and across Amira Kadal, mostly inhabited by the Panjabi, Hindu and Sikh businessmen, the Congress tricolour flags were prominently displayed atop shopping centres and residential premises. The era of the television had not yet dawned on the sub-continent. So most of our people sat in our homes in the afternoon till late in the night, listening attentively to the radio broadcasts from Delhi, describing in detail all the ceremonies involving transfer of power from the British to the Indian hands and the sheer madness and euphoria that had overtaken the mass of people in the Capital, still blissfully not adequately aware of the unprecedented holocaust that had just started overwhelming the 'vast populations of innocent and peace loving citizens on both sides of the border across the West and the East Panjab. I recall that I and my family and a few friends spent most of the afternoon listening in to the radio reports of the celebrations in Delhi. Even so many of us, still somewhat uneasy and unaware of what was in store for our homeland of Jammu and Kashmir, did by no means feel supremely uplifted by this long-awaited dawn of the political liberation of our populous and vast country.

from Koshur Samachar

New Delhi

Jammu & Kashmir : Complexities of Conflict, 1998

In the midst of the conflict and controversies now plaguing the current constantly fluctuating scenario in Jammu and Kashmir, most people not adequately aware of the history of our times may be surprised to be told that this princely domain of the erstwhile British Indian Empire was uniquely difficult to be smoothly and peacefully adjusted within the scheme of partition, hastily conceived and implemented in the summer of 1947. It was a desperate remedy for a desperate situation. For since the eruption of the unprecedented communal carnage, called the Great Calcutta Killing, unleashed by the United Bengal's Muslim League government in August 1946, a violent communal divide spread to the countryside in what was then East Bengal, leading to repercussions in the neighbouring Hindu majority state of Bihar. In fact, we have not even now come to the end of the chain reactions all over the subcontinent unleashed by this carnage.

As a result, an unprecedented sectarian civil strife had engulfed large areas of North India to such an extent by the early summer of 1947 that both the Congress party and the British Government had to concede the formation of the truncated Muslim dominated State of Pakistan covering the north-western and eastern Muslim majority regions of the Indian subcontinent and divided by a thousand miles of what became the residuary and

continuing State of India. The whole plan, vastly irrational by the logic of history and economics and the principles of centuries-old inter-communal human relationships, was brought into being by an unprecedented hastily planned and promulgated Act of the British Parliament. Obviously, because of the intercommunal fires raging over large areas of the country, this drastic political surgery had to be resorted to in order to prevent a general breakdown of administration over the whole of North India. Human history is not the result merely of what Marx called "the class struggle" but also of forces of violence engendered by irrational mass emotions of fear and hate.

Now in this context of the human and political situation that had come to a crisis by the summer of 1947, it might be helpful to consider how the state of Jammu and Kashmir had to face the future. Among such autocratic principalities, big and minor and tiny, all told numbering over 560, Jammu and Kashmir was a unique domain in many respects. In area it was the largest and in population second only to Hyderabad. Its frontiers in the East and the North touched Tibet, Sinkiang (China) and its most northern outpost of Gilgit where it was once claimed that the three empire (the Czarist, the Chinese and the British) met, it was within the hailing distance of U.S.S.R. It was ruled by a Hindu of the Dogra Rajput clan based in Jammu, while Muslims comprised nearly 70 percent of its total population. As if this demographic diversity was not enough, the Jammu Division was a

marginally Hindu majority area whereas the Northern Frontier province was dominated by the Buddhists of Ladakh. Further, neither ethnically nor linguistically could the state be called a harmonious entity. Most of the Muslims of the Valley as also those having a marginal majority in the Doda District of the Jammu Division speak Kashmiri, while the inhabitants of the Dogra belt of the Jammu region have close affinities with their brethren in the Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh. Moreover, the inhabitants of the landlocked Poonch district and the Mirpur district adjoining the frontiers of what is now Pakistani Punjab were mainly Muslims of the Punjabi-speaking stock.

In the midst of this peculiar situation, demographic and geographical, where did the State of Jammu and Kashmir stand once the British paramount power was withdrawn from the subcontinent? Obviously, this state could have smoothly and easily fitted into the picture of a united federation of the whole of India. The anomaly of a Muslim majority area being governed by a Hindu ruler could have been adjusted easily on the basis of establishing an equally feasible democratic order as between this state and Hyderabad, a Hindu majority principality governed by a Muslim Nizam. It is a fact that in 1946, when the British authorities were seriously committed to a speedy liquidation of their empire, all parties, including most of the ruling chiefs and barring only the Muslim League, were wholeheartedly for the establishment of a sovereign independent federation of India.

Unfortunately, the slogan of a separate sovereign Muslim state was forcefully raised by the Muslim League in 1940 which had unleashed an emotional upsurge among the Muslim middle class. So the subcontinent was divided in 1947 unleashing an unprecedentedly immense mass exodus of religious minorities across the border in the West and accompanied by unmentionable brutalities.

According to the India Independence Act of 1947, passed by the British Parliament in record haste, the provincial power, in what were then called "the British Indian" provinces, were to devolve upon the truncated or intact provincial legislatures elected in early 1946, while at the Centre the authority was to be wielded by the two sections of the Constituent Assembly as indirectly elected in late 1946 and then split into sections as demanded by the Muslim League.

As for the several hundred autocratic and hereditary princely domains, the Act, while abrogating all previous treaties entered into between the rulers and the British power, left it to the will of each individual ruler to accede to India or the newly created dominion of Pakistan, or to remain independent. And, because of the deep cleavage of policies between the Congress and the Muslim League, no consensus could be arrived at between them as to how the integration of these discarded children of the British imperial policies should take place in the new set-up. While the Congress Party all along had laid stress on the will of the people of these princedoms, the leaders of the

Muslim League, right till the end of July 1947, proclaimed that the personal choice of the individual rulers should prevail in this regard.

Given this peculiar legal and political situation, what was Maharaja Hari Singh to do in that tragic summer of 1947? It was obvious that his personal inclination was to accede to India, especially as the boundary line drawn by Radcliff across Punjab provided him with a viable, though precarious, link with the territory of the Indian Dominion. But he knew that a vast section of the Punjabi--speaking Muslim inhabitants of the Western districts-Poonch and Mirpur—of the Jammu Division would like to join Pakistan. As for the Kashmiri-speaking Muslims of the Valley and the adjoining areas of what is now the Doda district, obviously they were mostly adherents of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference led by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, a party that had refused to fall in line, like the Red Shirts of the North-West Frontier Province led by Khan Adbul Ghaffar Khan, with the Muslim League ideology of dividing the subcontinent on the basis of religion. But, unfortunately, this most important political organization of the State had been suppressed by the Dogra ruler and its leaders imprisoned following the Quit Kashmir movement sponsored by Sheikh Abdullah in 1946.

MAHARAJA'S INDECISION

Consequently, the Maharaja did not accede either to India or to Pakistan by the deadline of August 15, 1947. Obviously, he was toying with the idea of remaining

independent. In any case, the Maharaja refused to make any decisive move even when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel sent word to him in July 1947 that India would not take it amiss in case he decided to accede to Pakistan. Apart from his personal inclination, it was also clear that his own armed Dogra units were not prepared to have any truck with Pakistan. As against this, the Muslim fighting clans of Poonch, with about 50,000 of them being linked by 1947 as fighting personnel or pensioners of the undivided armed forces of British India, could not easily be separated from what emerged as the defence forces of Pakistan after the 1947 partition.

In any case, soon after the British withdrawal in August 1947, apart from the forcible occupation of the Gilgit base by the Gilgit Scouts, a force locally raised and officered by the Britishers, and some internal pro-Pakistan agitation in Poonch, most of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir continued to remain for some time an island of peace, in spite of the fires of sectarian strife then raging in the contiguous Punjab province since March 1947. In fact, till almost early October, thousands of terror-stricken refugees, both Muslim and non-Muslim, found it possible to move through Jammu in search of areas of security beyond the dividing line drawn between West and East Punjab in August 1947.

UNDECLARED WAR

Ultimately, this state of uncertainty for Jammu and Kashmir was ended by the unleashing of the tribal invasion of the Valley if Kashmir, as planned and

sponsored by Pakistan, by October 20. 1947. The armed regiments of the Maharaja's forces—scattered in small units all over the state's extensive borders with Pakistan—were easily overpowered along the Jhelum Valley motor road linking Srinagar with Rawalpindi. Within a few days, these invaders had overrun most of the Northern area of the Valley and were within striking distance of Srinagar in the last week of October. So Maharaja Hari Singh, who had been just marking time since August 15, had to seek military assistance from India and to accede to the Indian Dominion. In the beginning, Pakistan, as in the case of the current turmoil in the state, denied any responsibility for this development, though some months later it could not conceal from the visiting UN Kashmir Commission the fact that by May 1948 its regular army units were operating in several sectors of Jammu and Kashmir.

It is pertinent to recall that, in the midst of this undeclared state of war between India and Pakistan, the Valley remained a haven of communal peace; its people freely giving succour and shelter both to the non-Muslim refugees fleeing from the tribal atrocities unleashed in the Valley and the Muslim refugees forced to seek security from the attacks of the non-Muslim militant armed gangs in the Jammu region. The credit for this unique phenomenon must be given by all historians to the then leadership of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and to the centuries-old traditions of religious tolerance that had characterized the ethos and culture of all Kashmiris. Anyway, this phase of an undeclared war

between India and Pakistan came to a close on January 1, 1949, according to a ceasefire agreement through the intervention of the UN Security Council. This left the whole of the Valley and large chunks of territory in Jammu and the frontier regions in Indian hands, comprising about two-thirds of the total area of the state and about three-fourths of its population. As a corollary to this ceasefire, it was also proposed to arrange a plebiscite in the state to settle its final alignment as between India and Pakistan, after certain follow-up obligations were fulfilled by both India and Pakistan, the most important of these being that Pakistan should wholly vacate the territory of the state. The debate then passed on to the Security Council at Lake Success, where the delegates of India and Pakistan eloquently held forth from year to year their respective positions over these follow-up provisions for arriving at a final agreement.

This futile debate dragged on for nearly 16 years till the unleashing of a short war between India and Pakistan in 1965 when the latter tried to break through the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir in August 1965 and incidentally ignored the international frontier or the cease—fire line as accepted by Pakistan on January 1, 1949. This led to an armed stalemate and later to a reversion to the ceasefire line of January 1949 under the Tashkent Agreement of January 19, 1966, brought about between India and Pakistan through the good offices of the then Soviet Union. Even so, the stalemate over Kashmir continued till Pakistan sustained a decisive defeat over

the Bangladesh war in 1971, which it started in October 1971 to internationalise the issue. This paved the way for the Simla Agreement of 1972 between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, according to which the modified ceasefire line was renamed as the Line of Control and both parties agreed not to disturb it till a mutually agreed settlement over the Kashmir issue was arrived at.

Since 1989, the Pakistan authorities initiated a new strategy to cause instability in Jammu and Kashmir by infiltrating into the Valley a large number of Kashmiri youth trained in the use of sophisticated weaponry for indulging in sabotage, killings, abduction and assassination of innocent persons and in the disruption of vital communications. It must have taken several years to plan and implement this strategy.

To make confusion worse confounded, a number of militant outfits with diverse political objectives are ruling the roost in the chaos now prevailing in the Valley and parts of the Doda district across the mountain barrier of Pir Panchal. It is obvious that the main political objective of the present authorities in Pakistan is to grab the Valley by force or fraud. But the so-called Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front based in Pakistan-held territory desired to establish an independent non-sectarian state of Jammu and Kashmir. This must be very embarrassing to Pakistan, especially as the Front appears to have gathered some substantial following in the so-called "Azad Kashmir" now under the occupation of Pakistan. Moreover, some extremely conservative militant groups now operating

in Kashmir desire to establish a fundamentalist Islamic regime, the type of which does not operate at present either in Pakistan or in most other Muslim countries spread out from Indonesia to Morocco. And all such diverse slogans are being raised in the name of self-determination.

Let us consider for a moment how this principle of self-determination can be applied to the creation of the apparently attractive concept of an Independent Jammu and Kashmir. Those who raise this slogan seem to forget tat Jammu and Kashmir State (from 1846 to 1947) was not a unitary state but a conglomeration of a number of diverse sectarian, ethnic and linguistic units held together by the firm authority of an absolute ruler. As for the ceasefire line of 1949, Judge Owen Dixon—an observer deputed by the UN Security Council during the fifties to probe and report on the Kashmir tangle—said : "The division that has taken place by this line cannot be undone" and he further added that the whole question boiled down to the "allotment" of the Valley either through a limited plebiscite or by a mutual agreement between India and Pakistan.

Moreover, those who are dreaming of gaining the whole state for Pakistan should realize that neither the Buddhist Ladakh nor the Hindu-dominated areas of Jammu will ever agree to fall into such a trap. Then there is the central and major population section of the Kashmiri-speaking people. Unfortunately, they are spread out in sizeable numbers, apart from the Valley,

beyond the Pir Panchal Range in the Doda District of Jammu. Suppose, for argument's sake, they are allowed to join politically their ethnic and linguistic brethren in the Valley, this can cut them off physically both from the Valley and their main economic lifeline through Jammu. In short, how in the name of rationality and feasibility, can the principle of self-determination be applied to Jammu and Kashmir with its diverse racial and politically divided groups with any hope of success ? Lastly, what about more than 300,000 people, mostly Hindus and Sikhs with a sizeable section of peace-loving Muslims, who have been driven out of the Valley under an unprecedented panic generated by the activities of armed militants since early 1990? Where and how are these luckless so-called migrants to be rehabilitated? And what about the huge losses inflicted on the Valley by reckless arson of both government-owned and private movable and immovable property? In the context of this bloody and confused scenario, it appears just moonshine to talk of self-determination. Self-determination for whom, for what purpose and where?

As a footnote to clear the confusion spread by ignorant media agencies, who are these agitators who desire to cross the Line of Control from the Pakistan-occupied territory of the State? How many people know that the Pakistan-occupied territories of Jammu and Kashmir have been split by Pakistan into two separately administered units? First, there are the Northen Areas, comprising Gilgit and Baltistan, which have been

unilaterally, illegally and unconstitutionally merged with Pakistan. Then there is the territory which they call "Azad Kashmir", comprising the Punjabi-speaking districts of Muzaffarabad, Mirpur and part of Poonch. Within this area, there may now be residing a few thousand Kashmiris who migrated in 1947-48 to these parts in search of their dream of an Islamic earthly paradise of Pakistan. And yet the world publicity media are glibly speaking of "Kashmiris" trying to cross into the Valley across the Line of Control!

INSURRECTIONARY MOVEMENTS

It would seem that peace and prosperity are still a long way off from the strife-torn areas of Jammu and Kashmir. True, free India has had to deal with violent insurrectionary movements also in the North-east. Apparently, these appear to have been largely brought under control after many years of military and political moves. Even the long-drawn and most bloody violent course of militancy in Punjab appears to have turned the corner. Possibly, the masses of Punjab are now realising the futility of pursuing what a well-known Sikh intellectual called the "suicidal dream of Khalistan". Most unfortunately, there is as yet no definite indication of our reaching a similar turning point in the situation now prevailing in the "unhappy valley". Nothing short of a political miracle can possibly change qualitatively the present situation there. For example, one can hope for a possibility of the emergence of bold and sane leadership among Kashmiri Muslims, a sort of leadership that can

denounce the cult of the gun and agree to talk to Delhi on the basis of guaranteeing feasible internal autonomy and establishing to the full extent the Constitution. For, ultimately, the situation in the Valley cannot be resolved merely as a law and order problem. Similarly, pouring into the state enormous funds, which may in the prevailing conditions pass into questionable hands, cannot win over the alienated masses of the common people.

Some close and objective observers of the current scene in the State have made note of some indications of recently emerging two hopeful features in the Valley of Kashmir. For one, very few genuine and educated Kashmiri youth are now eager or enthusiastic about joining the ranks of the terrorists or to cross the Line of Control to receive training in the use of highly sophisticated military hardware. The militant outfits now operating in the Valley comprise largely foreign mercenaries. Moreover, the masses of the totally unarmed Kashmiri common folk appear to be fed up with continuing wide-ranging violence , the utter breakdown of the rule of law since early 1990 and the excesses committed by many militants on the unprotected peaceful people. True, the ground level trends in these directions received a setback following the utterly inept mishandling of the obviously and potentially explosive situation at Chrari-Sharif even so, in the aftermath of this mishap, the common people at large may again pine for the so-far elusive state of peace and stability.

POSSIBLE MIRACLE

Before I close this review of current history as affecting Kashmir, I may be excused for dreaming of another possible miracle of history. Obviously, the present uncertain conditions of turmoil in the State can drag on for years without either Pakistan or India achieving a complete and decisive success in their respective objectives. May it not be possible for the two countries and their peoples, with centuries-old traditions of a shared culture and of peaceful coexistence, to come together on the basis of the existing Line of Control with guarantees of easy travel and trade between Kashmir and what Pakistan calls "Azad Kashmir" ? All this could possibly be accomplished within the framework of a common Indo-Pak defence agreement. The alternative, short of a mutually ruinous open war between India and Pakistan, may lead to a progress towards a happier style of living. Such a denouement to a long-drawn phase of mutual distrust will need statesmanship and vision of a high order by the rulers on both sides. I wonder whether it is just wishful thinking to hope for such a miracle to take place. Most unfortunately, the story of mankind on this earth is littered with calculated generation of mass-scale hate and fear and ignorance that have provided roots to most of our never-ending and futile violence between groups and groups divided by race, religion, language and by what they call political ideology.

from World Affairs

New Delhi

Where Is Kashmiriyat ?

Of late writers and journalists have been discussing the various parameters and dimension of what is defined as *Kashmiriyat*. I feel, however, that only discerning, Kashmir-born, and perceptive students of history can adequately analyse and project the full implications of this distinct sub-national syndrome. Hence I am venturing to dwell briefly on this particular aspect of inter-group life as known in Kashmir for the past several centuries. Further, I should like to mention two streams of this consciousness: first, as it involved the day-to-day lives of the common people of all sects; and, second, as it now affects the Kashmiri Pandits, most of whom have been driven to move out of their ancestral homeland during the past ten years under circumstances for which no objective and honest observer of the current turmoil in the Valley of Kashmir can hold them responsible.

So, first about *Kashmiriyat* in general. While going over the last seven to eight centuries of Kashmir history, it may be noted that for about two centuries following the subjugation of most of North India by the Turko-Afghan Muslim invaders, Kashmir continued to remain under the uneasy domination of a rather effete Hindu administration, and the only Muslim infiltration into the Valley was marked by peaceful activities of Islamic missionaries. In fact, the first short-lived Muslim ruler of Kashmir, Rinchen, who occupied the throne in 1324 A.D.,

was a convert and not an invader from outside. Then, following an unbroken and sordid chain of plots and counterplots, around the court of the last Hindu ruler and his widowed queen , Didda, an outstanding Muslim adventurer from across the Valley, Shahmir by name, established himself as the first firm Muslim Sultan of Kashmir under the name of Shamas-ud-Din. His dynasty lasted about a couple of centuries. It may be recalled that the early Muslim rule in Kashmir was rather mild and tolerant, so much so that for some time both the traditional Sanskrit and the newly introduced Persian continued to be recognized as alternative court languages. But, because of various types of degeneration besetting the Hindu society of the time, large masses of the erstwhile lower castes embraced Islam as a comparatively socially liberating movement. During this period of change only the small Brahmin community stuck tenaciously to their ancient faith and were, for the first time, subjected to fanatical religious persecution during the reign of Sultan Sikandar (1398 to 1420) better known in history as the Iconoclast (the Idol-breaker).

In the course of human history all irrational tyrannies and upheavals too tend to run their courses, giving place in time to the saner ways of living. It was towards the close of the fourteenth century that two basically harmonizing religious movements ushered a new peace-generating element among the people. This can be defined as the Islamic Sufism or a Rishi cult and the Brahmanic Shaivism. Apart from the eminent

scholarly exponents of the latter movement, obviously of the greatest upholder of this universal philosophy, both in action and in its utterance in the common "vulgar" medium of Kashmiri was Lal Ded or Laleshwari, a mystic woman saint, who may be regarded also the first outstanding creator of literary Kashmiri. Her younger contemporary, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, through his saintly renunciation of the pleasures of the world and through his spiritual utterances in the common native tongue produced an enduring impact on the lives of all common folk of Kashmir. It may be claimed that, through the lives of these two mystic saints,was born an ideal which historians came to define as "Kashmiriyat".

Again, in the administrative and political fields, a new beginning was initiated by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, the son of Sikandar the Iconoclast. Zain-ul-Abidin, even till now, afer a lapse of five centuries, is widely known in common Kashmiri parlance as Bad Shah, or the Great King. He was not only an administrative genius but also a learned scholar in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit. His religious tolerance ranks him easily with Akbar the Great, while with the record of his constructive nation building activities he is second to no ruler of his time. He not only gave full freedom to the non-Muslims to follow their faith, but abolished the hated poll tax, called the *jazia*, and to build new temples. He sent his speical emissaries to areas adjoining the Valley to recall the Brahmins who had migrated to safer regions during the rule of Sikandar, and had them rehabilitated both in the cuntryside and in

the capital on important official jobs. He ruled over Kashmir for about fifty years; and we may claim that, by the end of his reign, what we now call *Kashmiriyat* was firmly cosolidated as a way of life for all Kashmiris. It may be noted that, in spite of occasional minor setbacks, this atmosphere of harmony in diversity lasted down to our own times in some characteristic ways.

For example, in spite of many turbulent vicissitudes of history, the Hindus and Muslims continued to live together at peace both in towns and far flung remote villages in the countryside. They shared each other's places of worship. It may surprise some outsiders to know that in the annual calendar of Kashmir a number of dates were dedicated to the memory of the Muslim Rishis, and that no orthodox Muslim would take any non-vegetarian foods during the celebrations of the festivals associated with their names.

The Shahmiri dynasty of Sultans was replaced by the Chaks in the early sixteenth century. The Chaks tried to continue the traditions of the preceding rulers, but they were neither efficient nor very firm as administrators. The last Chak ruler, Yusaf Shah, was lured into his political web by Emperor Akbar and Kashmir became by 1585 a province of the Mughal Empire. The Chaks were, moreover, adherents of the Shia sect, and so could not claim the unstinted allegiance of the Sunis who have all through been the overwhelming majority among the Muslims of Kashmir. Yusaf Shah, besides, was an addict to lazy life and pleasure of the arts, and found little time

to attend to the more arduous and more prosaic functions of governing. Nevertheless, he has left behind a tradition of culture as embodied in the immortal songs and lyrics of his gifted but ill-fated queen, Habba Khatun, whose verses are still remembered and sung by the high and the low in the villages and towns of Kashmir, by itself a rich legacy of the essence of *Kashmiriyat*.

The Mughal rule was replaced by the Afghans around 1760 A.D. This was followed by the Sikhs when Ranjit Singh annexed Kashmir in 1819. Following the demise of that redoubtable Sikh ruler, as all of us know, the Sikh empire disintegrated and the Valley was sold to the Dogra Maharaja Ghulab Singh of Jammu by the East India Company through the infamous Treaty of Amritsar in 1846. The rule of the Dogra Maharajas survived for a century till 1947 under the powerful protecting umbrella of the British Indian Empire. All through these chequered phases of a foreign domination the Valley witnesses alternating phases of good and bad administration. But what we may call the basic aspects of *Kashmiriyat* survived down to our own times. Islam, as I understand it, was conceived by its great founder as a religion of peace. I have had opportunities of reading a good deal about the history of Islam written by some eminent scholars of both India and Pakistan. According to them, any cult of brutal violence masquerading as religion is sanctioned neither by the *Holy Quran* nor by the career of the Prophet himself. This does not mean that people who feel oppressed for valid reasons are to be deprived of the right

to flight against injustice. But this should not be done through slaughtering innocent unarmed people. This is, in my opinion, the essence of all religions, including that of Islam. So I wonder whether what we call *Kashmiriyat* is being destroyed beyond recall by what is happening in the Valley today. Some newspaper reading persons might remember that. I recall how since 1948 the Kashmiris had to suffer a number of genuine grievances at the hands of the ruling juntas both in New Delhi and at Srinagar. So what I am writing now is in sorrow and not in anger. In this regard I am actuated neither by the present plight of my community nor by my personal losses in my fire-damaged house in Srinagar. It may interest some readers to know that among the most precious possessions I miss in my forced exile are my collection of books. Among these I may specially mention a manuscript verson of Fyzee's Persian translation of the *Bhagwat Purana*, recorded in the hands of my great grand father, and a fine & faithful Urdu verse rendering of *The Bhagwad Gita* presented to me by its learned author, Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, who was Principal of the Amar Singh College, Srinagar, from 1942 to 1945, and who, like Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, took pride in being "a Brahmin by blood: as a descendant of his Kashmiri ancestors converted and settled for a couple of generations in the Punjab. My main lament is :- "Are all the traditions of Kashmiriyat to be lost for ever through the present bloody turmoil engulfing the Valley?"

Kashmiri Pandits and "Kashmiriyat"

Though there are no authentic historical records available in this regard, it is obvious that following the establishment and consolidation of Muslim rule in Kashmir by the middle of the fourteenth century a large number of Kashmiri Brahmins migrated to what appeared to them more congenial regions in the sub-continent. In fact, there is a tradition that some of them moved as far South as the Konkan Coast and merged with the Saraswat Brahmins of that region. There is also a tradition that this movement received a serious impetus following the sustained persecution unleashed against them in the reign of Sultan Sikandar (1398 to 1420). The racial memory of this period of tyranny has left its stamp on the psyche of Kashmiri Brahmins; and even now it is related that just eleven families escaped this trauma by going into hiding in some inaccessible regions of the Valley. Then came the tolerant and enlightened rule of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1423-1474), when a large number of these erstwhile migrants were recalled by that king and rehabilitated in perfect security and honour in the towns and villages of Kashmir. According to our racial lore these recalled migrants are known as *Banamasis*, while those who had stuck fast to their soil in times of trouble are called *Malmasis*. By the close of the long and glorious reign of Bad Shah, what we now call *Kashmiriyat* had got crystalized as a way of life both culturally and politically.

In the course of the last five centuries Kashmiris have been through recurring phases of tyrannical foreign rule which often involved in suffering and oppression not only Kashmiri Pandits but all Kashmiris generally. It is an amazing feature of our history that this tolerant and harmonious way of living has survived down to our own times. Let us consider how this very small but talented minority adjusted themselves to this changing scenario even long after the times when the Brahmins in India strenuously pursued both learning and political power in the whole of Bharat Varsha while generally shunning the pursuit of material wealth and material comforts.

Though Zain-ul-Abidin zealously pursued a policy of positive encouragement of all learning, including that of Sanskrit philosophy and literature, by his time Persian had been firmly established as the official language of administration and culture. The Brahmins easily adopted this languages as their own and, in the centuries that followed, produced a considerable amount of excellent literature through that medium. Again, though they stuck fast to their ancient religious practices and elaborate ceremonial, they tried their utmost to join the new cultural streams ushered in the wake of a firmly established Muslim rule. They easily welcomed the new trends of religions harmony as indicated by the universal veneration in which the utterances of mystic saints, like Laleshwari and Rishi Nur-ud-Din Nurani, were held alike by the Muslims and the Hindus of Kashmir.

It is relevant to mention here that Kashmiri

Brahmins have traditionally been, unlike most of the Brahmin communities in the rest of the country, freely using non-vegetarian diet like lamb, fish or fowl. So it was easy for them to adapt themselves to the enjoyment of the varied delicate dishes of the meat -based cuisine brought to perfection by the Persians and transmitted to Kashmir during early Muslim rule, though, till not so distant times in the past, Kashmiri Brahmins, both those in Kashmir and those settled outside, were rigid in partaking in such delicacies only if prepared by trained Brahmin cooks.

Next, consider the mode of dress adopted by the Pandits for their official use. It did not take them long to accept the distinctive Mughal elitist outfit - both the turban and the lower garments - for official use, while in the comparative privacy of their homes they stuck to the use of the typical Kashmiri loose over-garment, called the *Pheran*. Later, when foreign British authorities penetrated into the remote fastnesses of their Himalayan homeland, they were among the first educated elite to adopt a somewhat modified pattern of European clothing.

Again, we may consider how, in the overall setting of their *Kashmiriyat*, this small minority managed to cling to their distinct social identity both in the Valley and beyond its boundaries. In the Valley itself, they formed a close-knit social group who rigidly stuck to certain hoary traditions governing their modes of worship, the celebration of their religious festivals and the elaborate rituals marking the observance of the birth, initiation,

marriage, death and post-mortem propitiation of the departed soul of every member of the community.

It is interesting to note in this context that right from the early stages of the Mughal rule in Kashmir numbers of Kashmiri Brahmin families migrated to the leading urban centres in North India and to the princely courts of Rajasthan where most of them found gainful employment, because of their proficiency in the use of Persian & their close cultural affinities with the members of the newly emerging Indo-Muslim ruling classes, following the successful efforts by Emperor Akbar to convert the dominant Muslim rule into a national and what is now called a secular order. By the early years of the present century the total number of this migrant Kashmiri Brahmin community may have risen to about ten to twelve thousand persons. But incredible as it may sound now in the context of the current constantly fluctuating social mores, this small community successfully maintained their social identity. First, they continued maintaining some tenuous social links with their erstwhile mountain-girt homeland; and, apart from & in spite of discarding the use of their Kashmiri mother tongue, they rejected the very idea of intermarrying among any other Brahmin communities of North India and faithfully observed all the rituals associated with all their mundane and sacred functioning as Kashmiri Sarswat Brahmins. As is so well known, during the past two centuries these migrants, in spite of their negligible numbers, made outstanding contributions to the growth of this vast

country as administrators, teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, politicians and outstanding fighters in the prolonged struggle for the political emancipation of our sub-continent. As already noted, while they in due course discarded the use of their native Kashmiri, they adopted Hindustani as their new mother tongue and, through the works of writers like Rattan Nath Dhar Sarshar, Daya Shankar Nasim, Brij Narain Ghakbast, to name only a few luminaries, they made substantial contributions towards the growth of modern Urdu literature.

Before I close, let me briefly recount the part played by Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley during the past sixty years towards the political developments starting from the historical water-shed of the year 1931. It is true that, to begin with, they enmasse fought somewhat shy of the new popular upsurge erupting against the feudal and autocratic rule of Jammu-based rulers. Nevertheless, it may not be forgotten that they were among the foremost champions in espousing the cause of the genuine subjects of Jammu & Kashmir for quite some years preceding the upsurge of 1931. The political events of the past six decades are just recent history, covering the lives of many of us still living. It may be conceded that, during this crucial period in the history of the Indo-Pak sub-continent on occasions members of our community may have, individually or collectively, adopted dubious postures towards the political aspirations of the Kashmiri masses. But no honest observer of our times will deny that a large number of our community faced imprisonment and

harassment during the various stages of the political movements led by the leaders of Kashmir and supported by its oppressed masses of common people. And when, during the fate -laden and blood-soaked months of 1947, the Valley became a haven of peaceful refuge for victims of communal madness of both sides, the Kashmiri Pandits along with their Muslim brethren, wrought that miracle of inter-religious harmony of which Mahatma Gandhi took an admiring notice. What a pity if this small and inoffensive minority is now driven out of their homeland by forces at present beyond any one's control ! Such a catastrophe by itself alone might sound a death knell to the centuries old way of life, called Kashmiriyat !

Finally, I may conclude this brief review of the historical and cultural role of the Kashmiri Brahmins by posing a few relevant questions relating to their future as a distinct social and ethnic group. At present most of them have been uprooted from their ancient homeland where even till the close of 1989 the vast majority of them lived. If they are now forced into permanent exile, with their most important base gone, will they be able to maintain their ages old identity ? Apart from a congenial geographic and demographic milieu, what are the factors that hold a group together ? Possibly language and religion. So far as Kashmiri Pandits are concerned, most of their younger generations, in or outside Kashmir, have ceased to use Kashmiri during the past few decades. As for religion, its practice has been so much vitiated by modern politics and many other new modern fads, that

it has ceased to be a cementing force in many numerically small communities. Moreover, with the unprecedented growth during the past forty years of educated and job-seeking women in the community, it is well nigh impossible now to rigidly stick to marriages within one's restricted social fold. These developments have of late led to numerous inter-caste marriages among many of the mobile workseeking middle classes of the vast Hindu community. While mourning over the apparent demise of *Kashmiriyat*, are we sure that we can now for long retain our special traditional ethnic identity ? The answers to these questions lie ultimately with an Unseen Power which an American writer of our time designated as 'the Great Novelist who makes history".

THE PROBLEMS OF KASHMIRI MIGRANTS

The news that the Government of India has very belatedly set up an authoritative "Official Cell" to look into the problems of the so-called "Kashmir Migrants" must have lighted a ray of hope in the hearts of these long-suffering, woefully forsaken and benighted citizens of Bharat that is India. The credit for this achievement must go to the leaders of the All India Kashmiri Samaj and other eminent members of our *Biradari* who persistently and untiringly strove over the past few years to bring to the serious attention of the highest authorities in the land the miserable plight of this forlorn and uprooted crowd of refugees in their own country. In order to strive effectively to take some advantage of this gesture of the Government, it might help to detail briefly the various categories of these luckless people and the nature of the problems confronting them since early 1990.

(1) First, let us consider the most miserable lot of such people who have been forced to live in hastily assembled and inadequately provided camps, mainly in Delhi and around Jammu & Udhampur, right from the early summer of 1990. For the benefit of those who desire to understand their problems, it might help to remind the readers of "Koshur Samachar" of the issue of June, 1992, in which

there has been printed a very heart-rendering report by Shri Manmohan Wazir, I.P.S. (retd), and for some time one of the members of the Advisory Council nominated by the Governor of Kashmir, relating to the living conditions in the camps around Jammu. What they badly need is tolerably habitable living accommodation, regular payment of sanctioned relief and rations, effective medical attention and proper facilities for instruction of their school-going children. As is well known, many such forced exiles from the Valley have during the past years died of malnutrition, snake & scorpion bites, and sheer debilitating diseases in case of old people.

(2) Next, there are the problems of the college going and Kashmir University students now rotting in idleness around Jammu and Udhampur. For a large number of them who had duly completed their courses back in the Valley, the Kashmir University has not cared to arrange for their overdue examinations at centres outside the Valley; and as for those more unfortunate young people who could not complete their prescribed courses before they migrated from Kashmir, no authority in the Jammu Division has so far given a thought to their truncated careers.

(3) **Migrated Government Servants :-**

Most of these from the J&K cadres now camping outside the Valley have been permitted to draw their salaries at various stations as regularly as possible through the current intensely-beleaguered and severely shaken J & K administration. But a large number of them have been deprived of the promotions and other benefits they should have availed of in the normal course. Then the question remains; for how long can the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, with its fast drying-up resources, go on paying salaries to these several thousand employees as a sort of dole for no work done. As for the employees of the Central Government and other centrally sponsored undertakings, quite a large number of them are still cooling their heels waiting for suitable postings outside Kashmir.

(4) **Migrant Employees of the University of Kashmir:-**

Though the University is mainly a Government aided body, its employees now camping in Delhi have been allowed to draw their salaries through the Resident Commissioner, J & K Government, New Delhi, very irregularly, just by fits & starts, for reasons possibly known to the gods. Much worse, a number of them, having large provident fund balances to their credit in Srinagar, have not been permitted to draw on these genuine personal

resources even for such urgent needs as the wedding of a daughter or to seek a provisional shelter in the most costly metropolis of Delhi.

(5) **Lot of the employees of recognized private educational institutions :-**

Most of these institutions, as is well known, were run through the initiative and labours of the Hindu minority community of the Valley. Among these may be mentioned the Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, the Vishwabharati Institution at Rainawari, Srinagar, the National School and the D.A.V. Higher Secondary Institute at Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar. So far as my information goes, while I have no definite knowledge of the plight of the migrant employees of the first three of these institutions as mentioned above, I have before me the full plight of the migrant teachers of the D.A.V. Institute. I was closely connected with this most popular & prestigious institution for about 20 years as a member of its governing body, and I know that in the course of these years the Institute had come to own two buildings with spacious grounds and a piece of open ground at Alucha Bagh, Sringar, for further planned development. Moreover, right upto 1989 I know it had to its credit large funds available for current and extraordinary expenditure. Many unfortunate & experienced teachers of this school are now camping in Jammu

and other stations without any regular jobs. Nor have they been paid any salaries since January 1990 or permitted to withdraw any amounts from their accumulated provident funds. When it is recalled that this school has been a Government-aided body since its very inception, it is amazing that no one in authority at Jammu has till now paid any attention to the grievous plight of these uprooted teachers.

(6) **<u>The problems of uprooted students :-</u>**

Following the mass exodus of the Hindu minority from the Valley in early 1990, the courses and plans of thousands of their promising young people have been disrupted beyond any remedy so far. Quite a large number of them could not pursue and complete their studies in the medical, engineering and agriculture courses in the Valley and they are still waiting for their readjustments at appropriate institutions anywhere outside their ancestral homeland. Besides, there are now adrift a lot of aspiring young men & young women, with adequate qualifications and high merit, trying to seek admissions to higher general and professional courses. It is time that the authorities in New Delhi took some special steps to meet their genuine requirements, steps that are among the basic duties of a system claiming to function as a welfare state.

(7) **Properties destroyed or illegally occupied by antisocial elements :-**

Since at this juncture no one in Delhi or in Srinagar can safely predict when these uprooted migrants can return to their ancestral homes in absolute security & honour, the most serious problem to be dealt with is how to compensate them for their destroyed or illegally occupied properties. As reported by all types of media, some organised criminal elements in the Valley have, since 1990, adopted a thoroughly planned policy of destroying by fire vast immovable properties of the Hindu minority in the villages and the towns of the Valley and even in the suburbs or some interior pockets of the capital city of Srinagar. Moreover, it is now widely known that many such abandoned buildings are being used as fortified hideouts of the armed militants. The question arises as to how long are our uprooted people to wait for receipt of even any provisional compensation for these losses. True, a considerable section of these properties, built over the years through the sweat & blood of their erstwhile owners, were duly insured. But only a few of even such incumbents have so far received any payment genuinely due to them. Then what about other vast non-insured properties now damaged or destroyed through

unprecedented and uncontrolled insurgency ? In addition, it may be borne in view that the vast majority of these migrants, in the villages and the towns, still owned self-cultivated agricultural land holdings, orchards, cattle, trees of various types and modest business units of their own. These are all gone out of their hands for the present. Obviously, the worst sufferers among these uprooted people, are erstwhile rural-based people not working on any government jobs. Why should the authorities in New Delhi and in Srinagar not provide them with at least loans against their lost assets to enable them to start afresh with any modest undertakings to enable them just to keep their bodies and souls together ? The various types of relief suggested under this head can be provided only if the authorities can devise some easy short-cuts to get round the requirements of official formalities and red tape in the current unprecedented and abnormal conditions overwhelming the lives of these luckless & most loyal citizens of the Indian Union.

(8) **Safeguarding the sanctity and status of non-Muslim religious shrines :-**

As is thoroughly known to all serious students of current and past history, the Valley of Kashmir and its environs have since times immemorial been

noted by a large number of widely-scattered religious shrines of non Muslims (mainly of Hindus and later also of Sikhs). These had mostly remained undisturbed through centuries of Muslim rule. Among others, Francois Bernier, the famous French traveller and writer who travelled to Kashmir in the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb in the seventeenth century, testifies to this fact after traversing every nook and corner of the Valley. In fact, some of these shrines-like, for example, Amarnath Cave, Khirbhavani Shrine at Tulamula, Durga Nag, Srinagar, and Martand near Aanating are of all India importance to the devotees of all Hindu sects. These and numerous other shrines had considerable properties in the form of buildings and lands attached to them. The managing bodies of many of these had, moreover, accumulated large cash balances which were intact till at least late 1989. It is now for the authorities to inquire about the present state of these ancient seats of worship, to ensure their security and, if practicable, to secure control of the cash balances standing to the credit of the various & now defunct managing bodies for the overall benefit of the migrant community.

(9) **Conclusion :-**

The problems faced by the various categories of

the present migrant community from Kashmir, as summarized above, are by no means exhaustive. But these comprise the salient difficulties now being faced by these crowds of exiles from their ancestral homeland. In view of the fact that it is difficult for any close witness of the current ground level fluid situation in the Valley, now spreading its tentacles into adjacent areas in the Jammu region, to predict when some kind of feasible and dependable normalcy may be established in the State, some of the suggestions recorded above may be accepted as of a tentative character. But certainly they are of an urgent nature for the sheer survival as a social unit of an ancient and well-knit community whose contribution, in spite of their small numbers, to the culture and history of Kashmir & of India has all through by far exceeded the strength of their total population in the variegated & vast ocean of Indian humanity. Any government that now lets them fade out of history in sheer agony & distress will reap only the utter condemnation and curses of the future generations of all well meaning and broad-minded sections of the varied and colourful texture that constitutes what is called India's "unity in diversity".

As many of the readers of the current journals are aware, I have been writing occasionally for journals

during the past ten years mainly in order to analyse and understand the unprecedented tragedy that has overtaken Kashmir and our *Biradari* since the closing days of 1989. Obviously, there is no authentic parallel for this kind of upheaval in the recorded annals of our homeland of Kashmir. Yes, there is a tradition of relentless persecution of our people during the reign of Sultan Sikandar (1389-1416 A.D.), better known as the Idol Breaker. But the memory of this traumatic experience of our ancestors is just a tradition and we have no dependable statistics relating to the scale and extent of the persecution meted out to our small Brahmin community then. Later, during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, Sikandar's son, there was a revival of liberal & tolerant rule under which our people were enabled to lead fairly peaceful and honourable lives as almost a privileged minority. Since then our people have had to face from time to time oppression, persecution and discrimination. But, right through the periods of the Shahmiri & Chak Sultanates and later a longer span of Mughal rule followed by a shorter interlude of about six decades of Afghan occupation, most of our people managed to stick to their ancient home-land against whatever odds history confronted them with. In the light of this fairly tortuous historical record, the sort of mass exodus culminating in the early months of 1990 is the worst possible disaster with which our small community has had to contend, a

tragedy that threatens the very existence and continuation of our social identity.

Obviously, the bleak nightmare that has overwhelmed the land of Kashmir is the result of the inept and erroneous policies adopted and pursued by our rulers in Delhi for quite some decades of recent history. Now it is not merely a question of our survival as a distinct but by no means negligible social group, with a creditable record of contributions towards the history & culture not only of Kashmir but of India as a whole. Rather, what is happening in Kashmir now threatens the very foundation of India as a secular democracy. It is doubtful whether even now those who rule this vast land are adequately aware of this greater menace to the future of the Indian Union. At present all sorts of suggestions are being liberally thrown around as likely solutions to the present impasse, like revival of a normal political process in Jammu & Kashmir, carving out a security zone in the Valley for several lakhs of the hapless migrants, and so on & so forth. In any case, I have now no intention of dwelling at any length on the feasibility of any such plans; for most of these can be put to test only after the cult of the Klashinkov is completely eliminated by effective and, as far as possible, humane police action. What I am worried about now is how to deal with some of the most harmful trends that tend to strike at the very vitals of our social fabric.

For one, even while faced with the present large scale disaster threatening our future as a social entity, I am not sure that we have thus far evolved a genuinely united front armed with a comprehensive and practical programme that could help in resolving the problems which face our unemployed youth, our educationally disrupted student community, and the aged & the destitute members of our *Biradari* now eking out their miserable days & nights in the sub-human living conditions provided for them by the authorities in Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi.

Moreover, there is one more dismal aspect of our social living that has alarmed me to the very depth of my soul whenever I have had occasion to witness the unpardonably lavish & luxurious receptions & feasts thrown up of late by the members of our community right here in the great metropolis of Delhi on the celebrations of weddings and other related ceremonies. I concede that on such occasions some kind of celebration is reasonable in order to provide us opportunities of meeting our close relatives and friends. But, surely, in the face of the relentless disaster that has overtaken our people since early 1990, it is the bounden duty of the affluent among us to act with some restraint by reducing the scale and quality of such celebrations. This is no time for vulgar display of affluence. Is it not time for those who claim to be the leaders of the 'community to evolve a code of

conduct that should be observed by all, high or low or destitute, on such occasions. I am now a fairly old person, but I recall the days of my youth when a social code of conduct relating to such functions prevailed and was meticulously observed both by the rich and the poor in the towns and villages of Kashmir. Let me acknowledge here that I am prompted to raise this question in view of the very timely & appropriate warnings expressed strongly in this context in two recent articles contributed to *Koshur Samachar*, entitled "Will We Ever Improve"? by Spoilsport (December. 1992)-and "Will We Wake Up?" by Shri B.L. Kaul (February, 1993).

Finally, one of the most vital means that can hold intact the social identity of a community is a common mother tongue. In this regard we are already growing into a widely dispersed and varied lot. Those who were born & raised outside Kashmir during the past four decades do not speak Kashmiri. And those who were born & brought up in foreign lands since the fifties of the present century do not know even the use of Hindi. As against this, I have noted that children born of Tamil or Bengali parents in U.S.A. speak both English and their native tongues with equal ease & facility. Obviously, many of us older people still desire to cling to our historical cultural roots as represented by the *Vakyas* of Lal Ded & the *Shrukhs* of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, followed by the poems & songs, both devotional & secular, of such

creative crafts-persons of the spoken word as Habba Khatun, Arni Mal, Parmanand down to the present era of Mahjur, Azad, Nadim and Zinda Kaul. Moreover, under the impact of the new aspirations ushered in by the political changes witnessed since 1947, Kashmiri language has been further enriched by the development of a workable literary prose and the emergence of some new literary forms like the novel, the short story & even literary criticism. But there have at the same time emerged two factors which are tending to work against the future of the Kashmiri language and literature. For one, somehow the so called middle class elite of Kashmir do not appear to be keenly interested in the growth & progress of their mother tongue. Then there is the problem posed by the adoption by the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art & Culture of a modified form of the Perso-Arabic alphabet as the official script for Kashmiri. This makes it difficult for the younger generation of Kashmiris now residing beyond the confines of the Valley and ignorant of this script to keep in touch with he latest literary productions in the language. Next, as pointed out in an editorial write up, "Alternative Script for Kashmiris" *Koshur Samachar*, February, 1993 the current tragic upheaval in the Valley has considerably reduced the number of competent *katibs* (caligrphists) available for transcribing for the purposes of printing the latest productions in Kashmiri. Most of them have been driven

out of the Valley to seek shelter in regions where the rule of the gun does not hold sway. This pin-points one of the side effects of the tragedy that has overwhelmed our native region. Even so we may not forget that one of the vital links that holds a social group together is obviously a common mother tongue.

Losses Galore

In some of the well-documented articles in the current media mention has been made of the huge and almost incalculable losses of the personal and collective properties and painfully-built assets of the Kashmiri Pandit community following just a little short of a complete mass exodus of our *Biradari* from the Valley of Kashmir starting from early 1990. It is not my intention now to analyse and specify in detail the basic facts leading to this tragedy. So far as I can say, this is an event of unparalleled dimensions even in the tortuous historical career of this small Brahmin community. Obviously, the chief factor leading to this sad denouement was the utter panic of insecurity that gripped this small minority group when they watched from March to December 1989 the rapid speed at which the normal administrative authority was steadily crumbling unchecked and the corresponding accelerating supremacy of the widespread cult of the gun that was gaining ascendency in the towns and the countryside of the Valley. With the memories of the politically engineered onslaught on the properties and places of worship of the community around February-March of 1986 still fresh in their psyche, it was natural for this unarmed, traditionally most non-violent, numerically insignificant and woefully forsaken minority to take fright and try to escape beyond the turmoil-ridden Valley into regions beyond without calculating the consequences of this exodus into unwholesome regions

not at all ready to receive them with adequate love and compassion. I need not mention here the tally of the innocent Kashmiri Pandits gunned down, tortured and kidnapped from time to time right from September, 1989. To those who correctly maintain that a sizeable number of innocent peace-loving or politically committed Kashmiri Muslims too have fallen victims to this reign of terror let loose by the armed militants or the resultant inevitable crossfirings between the terrorists and the security forces, it could be pointed out that the total number up-to-date of casualties inflicted on Kashmiri Pandits are obviously alarmingly out of proportion to their very meagre population strength in the "Valley".

However, the point I should like to elaborate now is the potential loss of the collective assets of the community involved in their permanent exodus from Kashmir. It has been my view over the past several decades of changes and the process of destabilization at work in the country that the distinctive identity of our community could not be long sustained if, through an unrelenting economic squeeze or the sort of present, upheaval in the Valley that no one could envisage even ten years back, our people are compelled to move out enmass out of their centuries old historical and mountaingirt homeland. For one, though following a few centuries of vicissitudes earlier and the pressures generated since 1947, quite a large number of our talented people had settled in various urban centres of India and even in distant foreign lands during recent decades, right

till January, 1990, the overwhelmingly largest chunk of our *biradari* continued to hold on tenaciously to their native soil in utter faith and love. Obviously, if they are now scattered to all the winds without any plans, this will amount to almost complete destruction of our identity at its very roots.

Moreover, our community in the Valley had at their disposal large immovable and very valuable properties attached since time immemorial to their sacred shrines in the towns and the countryside. It is true that the members of our community have tried with some success to build fairly valuable collective properties in recent decades in various important centers where they have settled in the country, but all these in their totality could hardly bare even a minor comparison with the collective assets available to us in the Valley. In peaceful conditions these could have been converted into a powerful economic and political base for our community on the lines of the Muslim Auqaf Trust or the Sikh Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee now functioning and operating in Kashmir.

Following about, a four decade career in the teaching profession at Jammu, in Srinagar, and in the service of the Panjab University at Jallandhar, when I retired from active service, I tried for some years to participate in what is called public life in Srinagar. During this period I strove to work for two objectives; first, I felt the need to organize the community under the auspices of one sole organization, like the traditional political-cum-social representative body known as All State Kashmiri Pandit

Conference based at Shital Nath, Srinagar. Next, I tried to induce the various groups and coteries in control of properties and the substantial accumulated funds of our shrines to come together under one apex body through legislation. As regards the first objective, the last attempt in this regard was initiated by Brigadier R.N. Madan, then President of the All India Kashmiri Samaj, in a combined get-together of various rival bodies in the summer of 1989. It so chanced that I too participated in this gathering. Unfortunately, following several days' deliberations the attempt ended in an unresolved stalemate. Nor did any efforts since 1984 for realizing the other basic objective lead to any positive results.

I believe there is no point now in blaming our so called leadership of the community over these past lapses and lost opportunities. I am penning these lines to point out how our people failed to build their social and economic standing in the Valley and allowed the comparatively peaceful years following the historic watershed of 1947 to be eaten by the locusts. Now, alas, all these dreams appear to have been shattered beyond remedy in the tornado of history blowing over our much-loved and ancient native region, a storm any clear signs of the abatement of which are not yet in sight.

Kashmiri Pandits - What Next ?

As some sensitive thinker has remarked, "A study of history can be the best source of both knowledge and wisdom". Most unfortunately, when persons in power fail to learn from the wisdom stored in our recorded chronicles, history in its most destructive aspects repeats itself entailing widespread & irrational misery heaped on the lives of vast numbers of mankind. This was so in the past ages and this is so today, when we turn a cursory glance towards the violence & oppression meted out to large numbers of our race over widely - scattered regions of the globe.

Naturally, during the past eight years & more most of my waking hours have been mentally preoccupied with the unprecedented tragedy that has overtaken our small Brahman community whose main centuries - old base was till recently located in the Valley of Kashmir. We were a small residual minority of the Hindu-Buddhist population of Kashmir that constituted the overwhelming majority of the people till the early decades of the fourteenth century. Yet, no eminent historian, Hindu or Muslim or foreigner, right from the time of Jonaraja could ignore, in spite of our small numbers, the important roles we played in the historical and cultural developments not only in the annals of our ancient mountain girt homeland but also later by a smaller migrant Pandit community in the history of the Indian sub-continent.

During the years gone by I have read a good deal of history, including the history of Kashmir, not relating to any research project but to satisfy an urge which Aldous Huxley once humorously called "the beseting vice of reading". This includes such diverse works as Jonaraja's *Rajataingini, Tarikhi-Hassan*, Bernier's *Travels* & works by Gwash Lal Kaul, P. N. Bazaz & Bamzais (father & son). In fact, just at present I have been rereading two recent important works, *Family and Kinship : A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir* (first Indian edition, 1965) and *The Kahmiri Pandits* by Henny Sender (O.U.P., 1988). Both were sponsored as research projects, the former by the Australian National University and the latter by the University of Wisconsin, Madison, U.S.A. In the context of what I propose to write now, I should like first to sum up briefly the thesis of Miss Sender's book.

In her very interesting & well-documented work, Miss Sender, after tracing briefly the story of Kashmiri Brahmans in Kahmir from the late fourteenth century down to the declining phase of the Mughal Empire, concentrates on the main theme of her work, viz, the story of the migrant Kashmiri Pandits who through a continual process started moving down to the plains of North India from early eighteenth century and came in due course to establish distinctive positions in the varying systems of administration then prevailing over different regions of what was once the Empire founded by Babar and firmly consolidated by Akbar. Their first choice appears to have been Delhi. Following the most destructive onslaught of

Nadir Shah in 1739, most of them moved on to Avadh where Shuja-ud-Daula had established an autonomous state, first with its capital at Fyzabad & later at Lucknow. Following the decay of the Mughal culture around Delhi, these Nawabi capitals carried forward for a century the norms of the Indo-Mughal culture. From early nineteenth century, with the rise of the Sikh power at Lahore many ambitious Kashmiri Brahmans moved on to Lahore from Avadh or through processes of direct migrations from the Valley. It is true, as noted by the author, that following the decline of the Mughal authority, Kashmiri Brahmans had to face several phases of discrimination & persecution under the later Mughals & more severely so under the Afghan governors drawing their authority from Kabul. But, according to Miss Sender, there is no record of any solid evidence of these irritants or recurring famines in the Valley having precipitated the sort of mass exodus of the Pandits as witnessed by us from early 1990. As she develops her theme, Miss Sender records how this small migrant Brahman community, having settled in the urban centres of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan achieved two amazing objectives rather surprising in the annals of a small rootless minority. First, while sticking rigidly to their Kashmiri Brahman identity, they easily adapted themselves to the then prevailing Mughal culture by adoption as the medium of culture and administration of Persian and later Urdu languages. Equally easily they continued their earlier Kashmir based Muslim culture in matters of dress & cuisine. By the time of the Revolt of

1857 they were among the first North Indian communities to take to the study of English. Obviously, they thus continued to flourish under the British patronage right upto the end of the nineteenth century. By this time many of them had distinguished themselves in the fields of modern medicine & the legal profession. Lastly, they attained amazing and enviable distinctions in the field of active politics. This progress of the migrant Kashmiri Pandit community continued unabated till the thirties of the present century. That is the point of time where the thesis of Miss Henny Sender comes to a close.

Now let us consider the earlier publication, *Family & Kinship* by Dr. T.N.Madan. Its scope is by comparison very limited. It is, as its subtitle clarifies, "A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir", a topic very close to my experience and consciousness for I actually come from a rural based section of the community whose forbears, according to tradition, were settled for the past five centuries in a separate small hamlet adjacent to a minor township in South Kashmir, which even now bears the name of "Rainipora" harking back to Raina Pandit our remote ancestor & the founder of this suburb. I was born there and later when I moved to the nearest district town and later to Srinagar in pursuit of higher education & a more gainful and congenial occupation, I noticed quite a number of variations between the social patterns of the rural-based and the urban-based sections of our community. In fact, though I continued to maintain unbroken my links with my rural roots, in due course I

built a modest house in Srinagar which was my main home for more than four decades. Alas, that family abode now stands destroyed along with the precious books and other records I had collected there over half-a-century of my active academic pursuits!

Family and Kinship is a very perceptive and detailed study in depth of the rural Pandit community by one of the most scholarly Kashmiri Pandit anthropologists of our time. While going through this book a second time I noted how accurately and closely the author has detailed the social patterns of the rural based Pandit Community. But, what is equally important, he dwells also on the interaction between them and the local Muslims in terms of economic activities and harmonious social living. This distinctive feature of peaceful co-existence prevailing among the religious communities of rural Kashmir has never been so deep or intimate or so widespread in the towns and the metropolis of Srinagar. The author has pointedly and in some detail exposed this particular feature of rural life in Kashmir.

But, alas, that sort of distinctive cultural aspect of life in Kashmir is now a thing of the past. As a Kashmiri I do not blame the mass of Kashmiri Muslims for this tragedy. It is the politicians and administrators in Delhi and Srinagar who, through their mistaken perceptions and policies over the past four decades and more, have almost killed a special aspect of the social life of Kashmir, an aspect that had somehow survived intact through the misdeeds and tyrannies of the absolute rulers of earlier

centuries. How unfortunate that most of these failings of the persons in power since 1947 have been mistakenly and brazenly sought to be justified in the name of democracy ! And when history is sought to be destroyed on false pretensions of idealism, it is not easy to heal it back to life.

Through my continuing contacts with some Kashmiri Muslim friends, it has been brought to my notice that probably the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in early 1990 was a mistake. To those who honestly feel like this, I should commend a dispassionate consideration of the fact-laden article of DR. K.L. Chowdhry, entitled "The Press & the Present Crisis", appearing in the April 1993 issue of *Kashur Samachar*. It makes very painful reading, but the totality of the situation as projected therein is delineated with the utmost clarity and restraint. All those high placed and conscientious observers of the continuing tragedy of Kashmir would do well to ponder over this exceptionally honest and compassionate piece of writing.

Finally, where do India and we her disowned children stand now on the cross-roads of history ? Obviously, the powers that be in Delhi have to tackle the Kashmir problem with certain clear-cut priorities before them. *First*, they have to eliminate from the territory the last vestiges of the various foreign-sponsored gun-wielding outfits. *Second*, they must win back the trust of the Muslims of Kashmir based in the three distinct ethnic regions under their control. *Third*,

they have to come to some reasonable understanding with Pakistan for a final settlement of the Kashmir problem. Pursuit of each of these objectives bristles with difficult and incalculable problems. When, in God's good time, these objectives are fulfilled, those who rule in Delhi in the name of Mother India can possibly pay attention to their forsaken and forlorn children now living in sub-human conditions in hastily improvised camps around Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi. Apparently, when the high & mighty authorities holding onto the seats of power once held by Ashoka, Vikaramaditya and Akbar, can find the strength & the time to attend to our requirements many of these migrants might be dead & forgotten. Thus the problem created for several centuries of subsequent history of Kashmir by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin back in early fifteenth century through the rehabilitation of a persecuted and mainly self-exiled minority may be solved for good in the annals of human history.

Before I close, I should like to point out in all humility that if those who now rule from what was once the capital of Prithvi Raj Chauhan cannot solve this Kashmir imbroglio within a reasonably brief span of time, including the return & rehabilitation in security & honour of the so-called "Kashmir migrants", the very future of the Indian Union as one piece fortified by a genuine secular polity is at sake. Let those who have the right perception of the crisis take heed before it is too late !

Challenges to Kashmiri Pandit Identity

In view of the upheavals that erupted and came to a head in Kashmir towards the close of 1989 and early 1990, uprecedented in their magnitude and devastation in the past five centuries and driving out the vast majority of Kashmiri Pandits from their ancient regional habitat, it is time for us to take stock of the damage thus inflicted on our social and cultural identity and to wonder whether it is still possible for us to revive and retain that identity in the foreseeable future.

But before we consider this problem, let us try to sum up the main features of our social identity that enabled a small Brahmin community to project its contributions towards the wider cultural pattern of Kashmir and the variegated developments during the past two to the three centuries by our much smaller migrant population in several regions of India, extending from pre-1947 Punjab to Uttar Pradesh and Rajputana. I believe it is not pertinent now to hark back to the remote past when our small community, though geographically comparatively isolated from the rest of India, kept alive, from generation to generation, the deep spiritual values enshrined in the Rig Veda and the Upanishads and played a vital role in extending the peaceful message of Gautam Buddha in large areas of South-East Asia extending to Indonesia. In fact, I wonder how Guna Varman, born of a Brahmin family of Kashmir, travelled to these vast regions

over some of the highest mountain barriers in the world to carry the peaceful message of the Lord of Compassion to these distant lands.

The emergence of Kashmiri Brahmins as a distinct social entity and almost the sole representatives of the Hindu faith in Kashmir may be dated from the first phase of the Muslim rule in Kashmir. The first Muslim ruler, Rinchen, a Tibetan adventurer who migrated to the Valley from Ladakh, taking advantage of the then *degnerate* state of Hindu rule, first became a leading figure in the administration and then captured the throne and became a convert to Islàm, when the Kashmiri Brahmins refused to admit him to the Hindu religious fold. His reign lasted just three years (1320-23) and on his demise, was followed by a weak and precarious Hindu rule under Udyandeva. Then Shahmir, a Muslim adventurer from Swat, succeeded in capturing power and proclaimed himself as the first Sultan (1339-1342) under the title of Shamsud-Din.

According to recorded authentic accounts, the first phase of the Muslim rule was tolerant towards Hindus and, in fact, retained for some time the use of Sanskrit as an alternate medium of official business till it was completely replaced by Persian. Then came the rule of Sulṭan Sikandar, surnamed Butshikan (idol-breaker). During his reign (1389-1413) a sort of hell was let loose against Hindus, with large-scale forced conversions and killings, wide-ranging destruction of centuries-old places

of worship and driving out large numbers of the community mainly into neighbouring subordinate Hindu principalities of Kishtwar, Jammu and Rajouri. No dependable statistics of this holocaust have come down to us. It is, however, recorded that this massive persecution was largely pursued under the directions of the Sultan's Brahmin convert Prime Minister, Suha Bhat or later Saif-ud-Din. As a result, some of these Saraswat Brahmin refugees moved as far south as the Konkan coast of Maharashtra, where even now some of them acknowledge this origin. As we know, as a result of this persecution, there is a tradition that just eleven families of Kashmiri Brahmins escaped this relentless pogrom by taking shelter in remote hilly hideouts.

Let us, however, note that the muse of history, though a relentless deity, occasionally presents us with surprising episodes in the record of human affairs. This was witnessed in Kashmir when Sultan Sikandar's gifted, learned and widely travelled second son, Shari Khan ascended the throne in 1420 and then ruled the state till 1470 under his better known title of Zain-ul-Abidin. He took serious steps to recall thousands of uprooted Kashmiri Brahimins and settled them on important projects of national development both in the towns and the country-side. Like Akbar he was tolerant of all religious faiths and well versed in Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages and patronized translations of ancient Sanskrit religious lore of Hindus into Persian.

One need not go over the subsequent history of

Kashmir in detail as it involved the lives of Kashmiri Brahmins. As we know, the rule of Shahmiri dynasty came to an end by the early sixteenth century and was for some decades replaced by the rule of the Chak dynasty. Then, in the larger strategic interests of his vast empire and prompted by repeated infighting among the Chak claimants, Akbar's forces invaded and annexed Kashmir as a province in 1586. The Emperor was not interested in offering any kind of "Azadi" to his Kashmiri subjects but tried his level best to give them peace and prosperity. During the last phase of his rule, he visited Kashmir three times and tried his utmost to relieve famine and revive the traditional special industries of Kashmir.

The Mughal rule was, on the whole, beneficial for Kashmiri Brahmins because of the proficiency acquired by them in the official Persian language and its literature and their traditional experience of running a stable administration. This sort of peace and stability continued right upto the last declining phase of the Mughal rule till 1739, when Nadir Shah's raid and loot administered the final blow to the power and prestige of the Mughal Empire.

This was followed by the comparatively short episode of the very harsh Pathan rule from 1767-1819 which came to an end by the successful invasion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army and was followed by the rule of Dogra maharajas from 1846 to 1947. From 1948 to 1989, there was peace in the Valley and the vast majority of Kashmiri Brahmins, along with Punjabi Hindu settlers

and a small Sikh minority, continued to stick to the Valley. It is not intended here to dwell on the forces, both internal and external, that led to the large-scale eruptions of violence in the Valley and subsequent exodus of a vast number of our non-violent and unarmed people to what they regarded as safer stations outside the Valley. It would appear more pertinent here to pinpoint the social and cultural factors that held us together during the past five centuries as a distinct ethnic caste and cultural entity right from the time of Zain-ul-Abidin to our own times.

It is relevant to mention here that, following the consolidation of the Mughal rule, quite a number of Kashmiri Brahmin families migrated to other Indian regions and settled mainly in the urban centres of Delhi-Agra, Oudh, Rajputana and Lahore-Amritsar during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, while a few of them went as far as Orissa, Bengal, and the Central Provinces. Kashmir, however, continued to remain the main cultural centre of this peculiarly distinct ethnic and social entity. It is of interest now to consider what were the factors that held them together thus and what new factors - political, social and cultural - threaten this integrity at the present stage.

Following the spasmodic and intermittent migration of Kashmiri Brahmins during the 17th to 19th centuries to regions outside Kashmir, mainly to seek better opportunities, the community was divided into two sections, viz, those who stayed back in the Valley and

those who migrated to other regions of India. Even so, they held together in many matters which may be detailed now.

First, there was the vital question of languages. Those who stayed back in the Valley cultivated Sanskrit for their religious lore and numerous ceremoinals governing a Brahmins's career from birth to death. With the establishment and consolidation of the Muslim rule in the 14th century, they cultivated the study of Persian and later of English with the extension of the British rule over North India. But, so far as their mother-tongue was concerned, the people in the Valley stuck to Kashmiri down to the present times, while the migrants adopted Urdu or Hindi for use at home or in the marketplace. However, in spite of this divergence, the migrant community stuck fast together socially and continued to observe all the traditional Kashmiri-type festivals like *Sont* (or Basant), *Pun* (or Ganesh Chaturdashi) and *Shivratri*, as these were observed back in the Valley. Moreover, they continued following their traditional rituals of *Shradhas* as observed for their departed souls in Kashmir. Also, many of them retained or revived their contacts with their ancestral *purohits* (family priests) back in Kashmir.

Next, till recent times, Kashmiri Brahmins in the Valley or outside were rigid in the weddings of their sons and daughters only with the members of their exclusive Kashmiri Brahmin community. During my student days in Lucknow (1928-30) , quite a large community of

Kashmir Brahmans was dwelling in this town, probably the largest such exclusive community anywhere outside Kashmir and they, at some time during the earlier century, established a residential centre of their own which is still known as 'Kashmiri Mohalla'. Through my close contacts with some of these gentlemen of my extended *biradari,* I came to know that, right from their settlement in this Nawabi centre of Lucknow, they were very rigid in fixing marriage relationships among their own small community, though they were not averse to accept male matches from Kashmir if any youngmen of presentable qualifications and prospects were available.

Let me maintain here that there was at one stage a marked distinction between the two Kashmiri communities based in the Valley and those settled in the towns outside Kashmir. The latter were generally better placed, economically and culturally, while their racial blood brothers in Kashmir could be divided into three distinct categories-well placed state officials or landlords, members of the lower middle class working usually as clerks or school teachers, and a smaller category of have nots seeking their livelihood in private service or petty business ventures. But even in the early twenties of the present century, practically all Brahmin males in Kashmir were literate, as they had been so for centuries past, while only a very small number of girls living in the towns of Kashmir went regularly to schools . As against this, the womenfolk of the families outside Kashmir were educated in Hindi and even in basic English. In this regard, the

situation is vastly transformed by the present time. A large number of womenfolk from Kashmir are now highly qualified, both in the general and the technical line, are working in India and abroad on prestigious posts. As regards the Valley, by the 1980s, it would be hard to come across any illiterate Pandit girl in the towns or the countryside. Also, during the past 50 years or so, a large numbers of our youngmen have come out of Kahmir and are working on profitable jobs in India and abroad. These new migrants have largely overtaken in numbers the Pandit migrants of the past two centuries and most of them are doing very well outside the Valley.

Since 1990s a new problem collectively faces the community. Most of the Kashmiri Pandits have been uprooted from the Valley and a vast majority of these migrants are living in sub-human conditions in camps provided by the State and the Central governments at Udhampur, Nagrota, Jammu, Delhi and a few other towns. Many of the older ones of these migrants are dying under pressure of their present living conditions. Among the rest, there are petty landowning families, small-scale business owners and a few thousand state government employees who have still several years to go before they reach the age of superannuation. Some of the worst sufferers in this tragic holocaust are our young students whose educational careers and ambitions have been cruelly disrupted. In the face of this disaster, it is difficult to understand how we can retain our ages-old social and ethnic identity.

Another unprecedented development facing our identity is the result of an overwhelming growth in the number of our educated and job-seeking young women. As a consequence of the growth of these young people, dispersed over India and foreign lands, it appears difficult to imagine how we can now restrict our weddings within the limited fold of our community. Similarly, as regards the problem of a common mother tongue, the position now is almost beyond remedy. Most of our children now born and raised in different regions of India or abroad do not speak Kashmiri or even Hindi.

Around some time in the 14th century, when the lower Hindu castes disappeared from the population of the Valley the male members of the residual Brahmin community were apparently well-versed in the traditional orthodox ceremonials through the medium of Sanskrit, governing a Brahmin's career from birth to death. Later, around the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin, following their recall and rehabilitation many of them got so absorbed in government jobs-cum-business-cum-agriculture that they did not have the leisure to attend to these rituals. So, it was decided that each married couple should accept their son-in-law and his succeeding progency as *Kul Gurus* (family priests). In course of time, the Brahmins thus came to be divided into two sections, *Karkuns* and *Purohits.*

Quite till recent times, marriages between these two sections were very rare, if not forbidden. Now, with the tremendous advance in education, during the past 50 years, most aspiring young men from the Purohits have

given up their traditional priestly profession and secured jobs of high order. So, the number of the remnants of the older priestly class is getting exhausted from year to year ; and, in a short while, no such learned persons for our lengthy ceremonial performances like *Yagnopavit* will be available anywhere in the world. This too will lead to a sort of partial erosion of our special identity as Sarswat Brahmins. So, how shall Kashmiri Brahmins maintain their traditional identity? It might help to advance some possibilities in this regard.

Obviously, in the context of the overall situation now prevailing, Kashmiri Brahmins must discard their traditional diverse and lenghty schedules of all ceremonials-from birth to death-and festivals like the other reformed Hindu sects the world over. Then there is a beacon of hope provided by the various social organisations set up by Kashmiri Brahmins in India as also in various foreign countries, like Europe and North America, and various regions of India owning affiliation to the apex organization of the All-India Kashmir Samaj. Some of these bodies issue regular periodicals and newsletters, the more important of these being *Koshur Samachar* and *Naad* in New Delhi. I have been associated with the *Koshur Samachar* from its very inception. During the last two or three years, both its quality and presentation have improved considerably and it is in demand in India and even foreign lands wherever Kashmiris are now settled. The Editorial Broad, comprising competent but honorary members, deserves

credit for this publication. Only I should like to tell them that in the contributions relating to our experience in Kashmir during the last 60 to 70 years, the factual material might be scrutinized in a more effective manner.

Then there is the last and still lingering hope resting on the keen desire of lots of our uprooted brethren to return to Kashmir and get rehabilitated in peace and honour. If such a possibility is within realization in the reasonably near future, the only demands we could make are a firm establishment of the rule of law and some protective safeguards for us in the state's constitution, corresponding to the generous measures incorporated in the Indian constitution for a very small minority community like the Anglo-Indians. When such a situation dawns on our sacred ancestral homeland, some of us could even try to participate in the efforts of our Muslim brethren to revive our active interest in the growth and development of the Kashmiri language and literature. At my very advanced years, I may not live long enough to witness that possible development. Even so I still dream sometimes of such a glorious dawn breaking over Kashmir.

from Koshur Samachar

New Delhi

SECTION III

Perceptions of a Dedicated Teacher

The Place of Books in Life

Francis Bacon, who may be considered as one of the greatest connoisseurs in recorded history in the art of extracting pleasure out of books and life in general, has remarked, in his essay, *Of Studies*, in his characteristically sententious manner :-

"Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgement and disposition of business."

But this is only one of the many opinions expressed on the subject and by no means exhaustive ; and the opinions expressed have not always been altogether complimentary to books or lovers of books.

There is, for example, the famous statement of R.L. Stevenson that "books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life", an opinion expressed by the author almost with a touch of bravado and vainglory in his "Apology for Idlers", which reminds one of a telling remark in a Shakespearean play, in a certain dramatic context, "My Lord, the lady doth protest too much !" I think, therefore, this remark need not be taken so seriously. Stevenson was here labouring to defend the mood and way of life of an idler, but it may not be forgotten that he was himself one of the greatest lovers of books. For proof of this we have simply to turn

to another essay, *The Books that Have Influenced Me*, only a little less known than his "Apology", where he speaks of his favourite books and authors with a loving gusto that might have done honour to his master, William Hazlitt.

Again, let us take the case of Charles Lamb. It would be difficult to find a more devoted lover of books anywhere in heaven or earth. By an act of supreme self-abnegation, he denied to himself some of the normal joys of domestic life only to seek refuge in the company of his invalid sister and the books he loved, one might say adored, so much. The *Essays of Elia* is pervaded by this inveterate passion for reading, And yet, even he in his essay, *Oxford in the Vacation*, has had an oblique fling at those who are generally called "bookworms."

From charles Lamb let us turn to a more modern mind. The late Aldous Huxley at one place speaks of the "besetting vice of reading." But, even cursory acquaintance with his works will reveal that Huxley was one of the most widely read intellectuals of the present century. His tastes were extensive and varied, and his favourite fare in this regard included, apart from literature and history and modern psychology and economic theories, Eastern mysticism, Gandhian philosophy, Buddhism, and the Upanishadas. Others, in our own day, have described love of reading as a "dope", something as good or bad as, say, opium or drink or gambling.

It would be interesting to pause and ask: Are such charges seriously brought forward ? Are, then, books no

better than a game of whist ? Is there any basic incompatibility between love of books and a capacity to lead a full-blooded life of action, achievement, and enjoyment. Innumerable instances can be cited to prove that there is no fundamental contradiction between love of reading and the capacity to achieve success in other, possibly more significant, activities of human life. Let us take a few examples off-hand to illustrate this point. Whether for good or bad, nobody may deny that the great Naploeon was basically a man of action. Let us remember that he was, at the same time, a devoted lover of books from his very boyhood, through his days of glory, and right to the end of the most tragic chapter of his life at St. Helena. For an instance nearer home, let us consider the case of Jawaharlal Nehru, our late distinguished Prime Minister. Nobody may deny that here was a man who tasted of the joys and the sorrows, of the successes and the failures of life to the fullest extent possible; he, in the rather well-worn idiom of Tennyson, verily "drank life to the lees". And one of the chief pleasures of his rather abundant pattern of living was his love of books. As the world knows, he was not a man very much attracted by material possessions of life, though throughout his life he was always above want. He said years ago that he would hate to be poor; for, as he put it, though his demands on life were very modest, poverty would deprive him of indulging the pleaurable luxury of purchasing books from time to time. To quote him : "One extravagance which I have kept up will be hard to give

up and that is the buying of books". He then goes on to add, "It makes me sad to think what a small number of people in India read books".

So, we can easily arrive at two main conclusions regarding any attempts, past or present, at disparagement of books. Either those who scoff at books are perverted in their outlook on life or they are just trying to pass for what are called ultra-modern people. As for the tribe of those old boozers from Francis Bacon to Charles Lamb and Stevenson down to our own very modern Aldous Huxley, it may be assumed that, when they look askance at the innocent pleasures of book-reading, they are only striking a pose, and, to use a popular colloquilism, they are just talking with their tongues in their cheeks. There is no doubt that they knew better than anyone else the taste of their vintage.

But, in the ultimate analysis, one need not labour at length to prove what should appear obvious to any intelligent person. Hence, to vary the expression of Stevenson's dictum, let us accept that books are more than good enough in their own way; and that, while they need not become a substitute for life, they are a very essential complement and ingredient of a full-blooded existence.

It is easy enough in this context to argue that while there are almost numberless good books to read for anybody and everybody, the printed word can be and has been used for evil purposes also, for corrupting and freezing the minds of impressionable young people. While

not ignoring this danger, we may, for the time-being, keep this idea out of consideration. Let us assume that when we talk of books, we have in mind all that is good and wholesome in the world of letters, the reading of which people seek either for instruction of their intellect or for innocent pleasures of the mind.

Let us then consider a few of what may be called the comparatively utilitarian aspects of book-learning. There is no doubt about it that, in spite of the rapid growth and ever extending use of other means of mass education, like the radio and the T.V., books still remain our cheapest and most convenient means of acquiring knowledge. They can widen our understanding of human affairs by giving us a correct grasp of our past and present and the future-to-be, and thus help greatly in bringing nearer that one world on the realization of which all right-thinking men and women in all parts of the globe have pinned their hopes. Surely, through books we can acquire correct knowledge about our own affairs, and the proper use of this knowledge can lead to that type of genuine international understanding for which most of us are pining to-day.

This is how all literate people may consider the possibility of the many boons that reading of books may confer up on all mankind. But there are other not-so-obvious pleasures that books may offer to those book lovers who are a little passionately devoted to reading. Books can often provide for us a welcome refuge in sorrow and suffering and save us from that utter boredom

with life which is better described by the French word *ennui*. Reading, even of works of fiction, may give us a certain detachment of attitude to things and prevent us from becoming miserable by our constant preoccupation with our own personal problems and our never-ending grievances against life and our fellow-beings. To those who belong to the charmed circle of real book lovers this will by no means sound as an exaggerated claim.

For the benefit of these elect few, it is hardly necessary to dwell upon that rare and almost spiritual joy one derives from possessing one's own books, a feeling not to be identified with the gross desire to own other material objects of life. For a proof of this assertion, we can do no better than turn again to that greatest lover of books, I mean Charles Lamb, when he tells us, with a inimitable emotional poignancy, how he and his sister once argued late into the night as to whether he should go in for a rare folio edition of *Beaumont and Fletcher* or order a badly-needed new suit to his back, how they ultimately voted for *Beaumont and Fletcher*, and then how he walked out in order to wake up the book-dealer and carry the rather heavy volumes in triumph to his lodgings before he could compose himself to rest for the night, his faithful Bridget (as he usually calls his sister Mary, in his *Essays of Elia*) keeping a devoted vigil till his return home. It may not be difficult for the tribe of genuine booklovers to understand that not unoften one may love to purchase a book, a borrowed copy of which one may have read long back or even that one may not immediately sit down

to read a book acquired with loving care and at some sacrifice of other basic needs of life. For a true lover of books the mere physical proximity of the volumes of his choice can afford a joy that maybe too deep for words.

I am reminded here that some years ago I had an opportunity of writing a paper on "The Books I Have Not Read." The title may appear a little puzzling. But I may best explain it by quoting what has remained for me an unforgettable remark of my old teacher, Professor L. R. M. Brander, till late in charge of Publications, British Council, London. It is an incident of more, than 50 years ago, when I was a post-graduate student at Lucknow. Professor Brander, while once lecturing to the class, was a little taken aback to discover that one of the students had not even heard of Cervantes' immortal classic. "Have you not read *Don Quixote* ? asked the outraged Professor. "No sir!" came the unabashed reply of the student. The Professor paused for a while and then added in a lowered tone. "I envy you, young, man, for you can still look forward to a rare pleasure in life !" Even so, any devoted student of books can ever look forward to the pleasure of reading the books he would not read till a particular point of time. For, as Ruskin says, the treasures of literature are vaster, more varied, and by far richer than the wealth amassed by any great potentate now or in the past.

Lastly, there is that unique pleasure one drives from re-reading old masters after lapses of long or short intervals. One can thus understand a book better, look at

it from a new perspecitve, and , at the same time, recapture, to some extent, "the first fine rapture" of first dipping into its pages. How lovingly and with what typical exuberance does William Hazlitt dwell upon this idea in his essay, *On Reading Old Books:-*

" I hate to read new books. There are twenty or thirty volumes that I have read over again and again, and these are the only ones that I have any desire ever to read at all."

It is not possible to exhaust the theme in a short article. For, as all genuine lovers of books will concede, the pleasures that may be derived from books are as varied and as infinite as the opportunities that life presents to each of us and the moods and tempers that have ever differentiated us as individuals, since the beginning of recorded time, the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve in their rather precarious careers on this imperfect and tiny globe we call our world.

Broadcast from Jalandhar

in the Series "For the Universities."

Ego and Escapism

Generalization about the nature and meaning of poetry and about its classification can often be misleading. Nevertheless, it has always been claimed as the main business of literary criticism to analyse poetry and other forms of creative literature and to arrive at some general conclusions; otherwise, there will be no business left for the literary critic.

Usually, poetry is classified on the bases of the varied patterns of thought, feeling, sound effects, and metrical forms that it presents. Broadly speaking, all literary forms, including poetry, may be grouped under the main divisions, namely, the *Objective* and *Subjective* forms. This distinction is ultimately one only of degree, for absolute objectivity in poetry or any other form of art is impossible to attain. No matter how detached an artist may be, he cannot help to some extent projecting his own personality into his creative work. Even such a pre-eminently objective writer as Shakespeare cannot help revealing some aspects of his personal life in his dramas and poems. All the same, it has been observed that a close study of poetry reveals two fundamentally opposed moods-one of these tends to interpret life as it is while the other prefers to turn its face away from reality in order to escape from the problems that life presents. The latter attitude is often associated with what is called the romantic type of poetry, which has consequently been

sometimes designated as the "poetry of escape." This "escape" from the realities of life can be achieved in various ways; for instance, by seeking to take refuge, across the barriers of time and space, in a wonder land of the poet's own imagination. This is a regular feature of what we call romantic poetry. It may also be noted that this state of "escape" can quite as easily be attained through the pursuit by the poet of his own ego or personality. It should be of some interest to illustrate this point by reference to the works of some well-known poets.

A close study of the works of the English poets of the early nineteenth century, of what is usually called the period of Romantic Revival (1800-1835), reveals one common feature among the great poets of this age, viz, they are all intensely pre-occupied with their own selves. This common quality in the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats may be termed as the quality of self revelation. Yet the ways in which this feature presents itself in the works of these poets reveals quite an astonishing variety of moods and attitudes. It may be interesting to dwell on this aspect of their poetry briefly.

Let us first consider Wordsworth who, in his own time, was accepted as the acknowledged leader of a new movement in English poetry. Early in his youth he had toyed with the idea of becoming an active revolutionary, but he soon ended up by accepting a government job along with the then existing social and political systems in England. It is difficult to say how far he was satisfied with this position. But it is obvious that he assiduously

sought mental and spiritual refuge in contemplating the beauties of Nature and, as in *The Prelude,* in attempts to recapture imaginatively the visions of the glorious dawn when he had dreamed of changing the long-established bases of contemporary European society. Faced with a similar inner mental and spiritual conflict, Coleridge – Wordsworth's great contemporary and close friend – sought an escape in the enchanted atmosphere of a medieval world that had existed nowhere except in the dreams of poets.

Much more interesting is it to consider the work of Keats in this light. Of all the great poets of this period, he was gifted with the qualities of restraint and detachment that appear truly classical. And yet, even he cannot escape being haunted by the shadow of his own personality. Let us take his very well known *Ode to A Nightingale.* In this intensely subjective lyric, in spite of commendable artistic restraint, the nightingale serves merely as an excuse for outpourings of personal emotions that are both sad and sweet. Similar moods find repetition in many of the sonnets of the poet.

This pre-occupation with one's ego is the chief quality of the poetry of Byron and Shelly, in whose works it is present in a degree that may rightly be considered excessive, abnormal, and even unhealthy. Both of them reacted strongly, almost violently, to the unpleasant factors of their personal lives and to what they considered the unjust social and political conditions in the life around them; and often, in order to seek an escape from their sorrows and disappointments and frustrations, they

found an opiate in the pursuit of their own personalities. It has been said about Byron that his poetry is essentially self-centred. He is himself the hero of *Childe Harold, Cain, The Corsair,* and *The Siege of Corinth.* It may even be asserted that this passion to project his ego on the pages of history drew him on to join the revolt of the Greeks against their Turkish overslords. In other words, Byron was thus trying to translate into action one of the abiding notes of his poetic nature.

Shelley is easily one of the most egoistic of all poets on record. It has been correctly put that the chief theme of Shellys' poetry, obvious or implied, is Shelley himself. He is himself the Spirit of Solitude in his *Alastor*, he seeks close spiritual kinship with Prometheus in his *Prometheus Unbound,* and his restless soul is the motive power behind the elemental speed of the storm in his *Ode to The West Wind.* We may go a little further and claim that in his *Adonais* he is not lamenting the lot of the dead poet Keats but his own fundamental incapacity to adjust his sensitive spirit to the sordid realities of life. This excessive egoistic element of Shelley's poetry has, in fact, been regarded by some of the present-day literary critics as the symptom of some mental disequilibrium. To quote one of them : "It is a kind of adolescent spirit, self-pitying, over-intense, as immature as a rash of acne or of religious mania." It is from such aspects of romanticism as this that some of the moderns have turned with relief to the "solid good sense" of Dryden and Pope.

It is not my intention here to pass any considered judgement generally on the egoistic element in poetry,

though it has been noted that an excessive preoccupation with one's ego can often vitiate the visions of beauty and truth that a poet claims to hold forth before the mental and spiritual gaze of his readers. Egoism may generally imply, on the part of a poet, a desire for escape from the unpleasent facts of life; but this need not necessarily be symptomatic of something basically unhealthy, immature, or reactionary in the nature of a poets's art. Frequent use of the first person singular has been one of the most time-honoured habits and traditions of lyrical poetry in all literatures. For a really great poet it is possible to reach out to what is universal and abiding, in spite of his frequent use of "I". Thus John Donne, a great English poet of the early seventeenth century, explores all possible regions of the human thought and of the physical world while appearing outwardly to be concerned with his personal loves and joys and fears. A much more cogent example of such an alchemy of poetic process is furnished by the lyrical poetry of Ghalib. In the garb of an overflow or personal emotion, Ghalib successfully seeks to rekindle our consciousness of some of the deepest and truest aspects of human life. Here is a poet who, while seeking an escape from his sorrows and disappointments, lights up a personality whose vision enables the petty individual to grasp, as it were in a flash, those eternal truths which all our philosophers, with all their boundless labours, have striven in vain to reach. This is an achievement rare in the history of letters anywhere in the world and, incidentally, presents to us a unique facet of "Ego and Escapism" in literature.

Communication and Literature

I am grateful for the courtesy extended to me by the organizers of this international seminar on "Communication and Literature" for participating in this important meet on a very fascinating subject of considerable interest both to the literary experts as also to the educated community in general. Most probably I owe this partly to the very active and enthusiastic participation in the proceedings by my son, M.L.Pandit of the University of Kashmir. At the same time, having retired from active teaching quite some years back, I have to confess that I feel somewhat out of date so far as the latest international researches on the subject of literature-reader relationship are concerned. So I trust you will kindly bear with me if I briefly record my reactions to the papers read and the discussions that followed at this learned gathering.

Let me first observe that this problem of verbal communication is at least as old as the stage at which the human species, in their evolutionary process, acquired the gift of speech. This is sometimes regarded as a unique and special faculty of our race; though we have some vague ideas of how some other living creatures-like ants, bees and even elephants -have developed some means of communication the mysteries of which are still largely beyond our ken.

Long before the human race learned to translate

their power of speech into literary creation, the gift of speech was probably used as a means of communication between individual and individual in the form of question and answer, for expression of emotional urges of love and hate, and both for revealing & hiding the true feelings of a human being. Next we come to the stage of literary creation long before the written words came into vogue. Some of the earliest extant specimens of this type of human expression, like the *Rig Veda* and Homer's epics, were preserved through the memories of people and passed on orally from generation to generation. This kind of exercise may be regarded as the earliest specimens of mass communication. Possibly another pre-historic form of mass communication could be cited when a tribal chief attempted to address or harangue his followers. Of these latter we have no records.

With the development of the written word, the human genius received a new impetus for recording literary and thoughtful creations in the form of books. A lot of this material all over the globe has been destroyed through the ravages of history and geography, though luckily quite a sizeable amount of this heritage has survived the manifold destructive agencies of time. As a consequence, various forms of literary creation got evolved, like the folk ballad, the lyric, the epic, the drama and various forms of human thinking on subjects like philosophy & science. In due course, recorded prose, starting as a vehicle of human thought, acquired some modern types in the form of prose fiction and literary

criticism. This last form of human thought has acquired new dimensions and largely broken international and interlingual barriers during the present century and provided new thinking on the vital relationship of communication between the literary artist and his audience. These ever-shifting thought patterns on techniques and interpretations of literature tend to pose a never-ceasing process of which no one can envisage any final stage.

If I may guardedly put it this way, in the ultimate analysis, the problem of communication presents a varied nexus between the creator of literature and his audience, varying from age to age, from country to country, from culture to culture, and from individual to individual.

Finally, I may venture to hold forth that about the whole process of literary creation and its impact on human minds as readers, there hovers an aura of eternal mystery. So I may be permitted to conclude with two quotations from the utterances on this theme by two of the most eminent literary figures of this century and of this region, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal :-

(a) In one of the closing pieces of *The Gitanjali*, Tagore observes :-

"I project my dreams of you in lasting songs. People come and ask me, 'What do you mean?' I do not know how to answer them. And you sit there smiling!"

(b) Next let me quote a couple of Persian verses in translation believed to have been composed by Dr. Iqbal when he lay dying during his last illness :-

When this body of mine
got covered with earth,
All sorts of people claimed
kinship with me,
But no one understood
this pilgrim,
As to what his message
was & for whom it was meant.
Never did they know
from where he came!

Presented at a Seminar
at the Jamia Milia Islamia,
New Delhi

Rabindranath Tagore as a Playwright

TO MY MOTHER LAND

Blessed I am that I am born to this land
and that, I had the luck to love her.
What care I if queenly treasure is not in her store,
but enough is for me the living wealth of her love,
The best gift of fragrance to my heart
comes from her own flowers,
and I know not where else shines the moon
that can flood my being with such loveliness.
The first light revealed to my eyes
was from her own sky
and let the same light kiss them
before they are closed for ever.

(Rabindra Nath Tagore)

Rabindranath Tagore has played such a vital and intimate role in the Indian Renaissance of the present century in all its phases that it is not easy even to-day, about six decades after the great man's passing away, to arrive at an objective assessment of his work and personality. By attaining pre-eminence in the fields of literature, education, and other creative cultural activities generally; by establishing for himself a reputation that travelled far beyond the confines of his native land; by the simplicity, the nobility, and the grandeur of his personal life and conduct; and, lastly, by his extensive, travels abroad in many foreign lands he raised prestige

of India to a level in the eyes of the world to a degree surpassed only by what was contributed in this behalf through the struggles and sacrifices of the Father of the Indian Nation. He was the first and so far the only Indian to achieve the unique distinction of being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature as far back as 1913. The school he established at Bolepore, better known to the world as Santineketan or the Abode of Peace, has now blossomed forth into a central University of international importance. Tagore belonged to a generation of great Indian patriots, poets, scientists, saints, all of titanic mould and proportions; and all through he shone forth like a dazzling sun among the stars of lesser light. In his patriotic, fervour he was hardly second even to Gandhiji, though he shunned the turmoil of direct action sponsored and led by the Mahatma for the first time in the early twenties of the present century. All these factors have thrown a considerable glamour and a sort of magic halo over the name of Rabindranath Tagore, with the result that it is still well-nigh impossible for an Indian to be quite dispassionate in judging his merits as a writer. Nevertheless, it is time that one may in all humility and reverence make an attempt to arrive at a correct evaluation of his literarily productions in the domain of dramatic writing.

While considering any aspect of Tagore's literary output, it should never be forgotten that he is primarily a mystic lyrist in the tradition of a number of well known mediaeval poet-saints of India, whose influence has

permeated the very core of Indian life during the last several centuries. Consequently, it may be observed that these basic qualities of Tagore's poetry have coloured all the other types of modern literature assayed by him. But before attempting any survey of his dramatic works it appears to be relevant to consider two important aspects of his work as a playwright; first, his links with the modern European drama; secondly, the relation between the plays and the stage for which, it may be presumed, he wrote them.

Though in essence the main features of Tagore's dramas carry forward the traditions of the old Indian Jatka plays, there is no doubt that he was also influenced largely by certain trends in the modern drama of the West. It may never be lost sight of that though Tagore claimed himself to be merely a writer in Bengali and though he is in spirit Indian to the core, his message was to humanity as a whole; and till the end of his days on this earth he was fully alive to the latest ideas and emotions that pulsated through the minds and hearts of men and women in the various parts of the globe. It will thus be seen that most of his plays have close affinities with the poetic or symbolist European drama of the present century typified in the works of such writers as Maurice Maeterlinck. His technique and style are, in fact, very close to those of the Irish mystics like Yeats and Synge, and it is not without significance that he was introduced to the cultural circles of the West by these protagonists of the Celtic Revival. English renderings of his plays were first

staged at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Considered in this international setting, it may not be out of place to mention that the dramatic output of Tagore is closely in line with certain definite trends in the dramatic movements of the modern times. This also accounts for the unique popularity enjoyed by some of Tagore's plays in the literary circles of the West. first in Dublin, then in France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Germany. But of all the countries of Europe Tagore attained the greatest popularity in Pre-Munich Czechoslovakia, through the establishment of a professorship in Bengali Language and Literature at the University of Prague.

In any treatment of European drama we usually try to relate the critical study of a particular dramatic literture to the stage for which it was originally produced. In this respect the study of Tagore presents a different picture. In this country, apart from some amateur dramatic societies and crude professionals, now nearly driven out of existence by the talking pictures, there is not in any part of the country a regular, well established theatre that could cater for the needs of cultured or even popular audiences. The popular stage traditions of this country do not go beyond the attempts of the old Jatka plays and the performances of well known Puranic stories by wandering companies of players. Such plays do not require much of a stage setting and can be acted in a temple court-yard or even in the open air. This state of affairs poses certain problems for a would-be play-wright in the present times, while at the same time he enjoys a

certain liberty of action not possible for a writer of plays in Europe or America. In spite of these limitations, however, great drama has occasionally been produced in this country; and even Kalidas's *Shakuntala* belongs to this tradition. In this context it may be of interest to draw attention to the following note prefacing the English translation of Tagore's play, *Chitra*:-

"The dramatic poem *Chitra* has been performed in India without scenery- the actors being surrounded by the audience. Proposals for its production here having been made to the author, he went through this translation and provided stage directions, but wished these omitted if it were printed as a book."

In short, Tagore's plays maintain this ages old tradition of the open air drama with the freedom as also the handicaps that go along with it.

There is no doubt, however, that Tagore himself helped considerably in a movement for building a new theatre in Calcutta, and by his own efforts succeeded in establishing a type of amateur theatre at Santineketan. But even the Santineketan theatre represents a sort of unadorned open air stage on which the boys of the institution often perform even the most exacting female parts. So, judged from modern European standards, "it may seem that Tagore's dramatic work is lacking in ordinary stage effect and tends to fluidity of movements; there is no bid for a curtain, no holding of the moment of suspense, in order to force a situation." In answer to such

criticism it may be maintained that his plays were written to attain a naturalness of style and simplicity of mode which has been attained so far only by the Irish players in the West. To quote Ernest Rhys : "We have here to reckon with the tradition of the stage as well as with the temperament of a playwright in judging a kind of drama so new to us. Rabindranath Tagore may break the rules of our common stage practice, but he breaks none that govern the leisurely drama of the open air and the courtyard, which he and his fellow playwrights have in mind."

This, in short, is the native background of Tagore's work as a playwright. He was no doubt greatly influenced by a study of modern European drama, and ideas. From these general considerations it may now be more fruitful and more revealing to turn to Tagore's plays. For a student unacquainted with the Bengali language, there is no alternative but to confine this survey only to those plays which are available in English. Luckily, most important of his plays are available in English translations. It would be interesting to consider the more outstanding pieces among these.

The plays that attracted the greatest attention of the western scholars early in the present century are *The King of the Dark Chamber*, *Chitra* and *Post Office*. *The King of the Dark Chamber* is a play with a spiritual meaning. It comprises a large number of scenes, a feature that is no real handicap to a type of drama that can easily be staged

in the open air. The central theme plays around the relations subsisting between the king and the queen. Other characters hover on fringes of varying distances from this central interest of the drama. After the prelude the scene shifts to the palace where Queen Sudharshana is waiting in the dark chamber to receive the king. The queen has never seen the face of her lord. So her mind is torn with the conflicting emotions of curiosity, doubt, misgiving, and wavering faith. She is in a state of mental torment caused by her uncertainty regarding the face and features of her royal master and husband. She asks her maid of honour, Surangama, to clear her doubts if she can. Surangama puts her no wiser by saying' "No, my Queen, he is not handsome. To call him beautiful would be to say far too little of him." Into this queer situation intrude other kings, some of whom strive to entice the queen from the love of her lord. The queen falters, doubts, errs, and meets disgrace and sorrow. But, by secret and strange moves, the king of the unseen face overcomes all obstacles and ultimately rescues the queen from her fallen condition. The drama closes with a scene of realization and fulfilment. It is the dark chamber again. The king's face is not uncovered but its supreme quality, that transcends mere physical beauty, has been revealed to the soul of the queen. Says she :-

"Your sight repelled me because I had sought to find you in the pleasure garden, in my Queen's chambers : there your meanest servant looks handsomer than you. That fever of longing has left my eyes for ever. You are

not beautiful, my lord- you stand beyond all comparisons!"

To any one familiar with the symbolic idiom of Hindu spiritualism a general interpretation of this play should not be far to seek. For instance, the Queen can represent the Created Being in quest of realization of his oneness with the Supreme Being. The Seeker makes mistakes, falters, and even deserts the right path. The Immanent Will watches the progress of the Created Being and, in spite of pitfalls, after prolonged suffering and travail, the latter is led on to Niravna in the fulness of time.

Chitra may be described as a lyrical drama with an allegorical meaning. The play is based on an episode in the *Mahabharata*. Chitra is the daughter and the only child of the King of Manipur who has trained her as a prince; and she is more at home in the arts of war and in hunting the wild beasts of the forest than in the ways of alluring the hearts of men. She normally dresses as a male warrior and has often longed to meet the great Arjuna, the hero of his race, and to challenge him to a single combat. One day while passing through the forest she comes upon a man asleep. Though not known to her, the man is Arjuna himself, who had come to this remote spot in the course of his wanderings as an exile. At sight of him Chitra is overtaken by a whirlwind of passion and stands speechless as he wakes up and walks away. Next morning she decks herself in the dress and ornaments of a princess and hastens to seek Arjuna in the forest temple. The great warrior, however, reminds her of his vow of celebacy, self-inflicted for a mere technical breach of right conduct

prior to his going into voluntary exile. In her despair Chitra turns to Madna (God of Love) and Vasanta (God of Youth). The God of Love promises to bring the world-conquering Arjuna to her feet; and she craves from the God of Youth one day of perfect womanly loveliness in which she may lose her unattractive plainness; then follows a love idyll which presents a contrast to the "stern drama of love's scourging in *The King of the Dark Chamber.*" In both these dramas the higher powers come into play across the desires of men and women who seek beauty and happiness in love and find their quest bound by immutable laws beyond their human control. "In both, a motive of fate, in the quest of supernal beauty and loveliness, is used to evoke the central idea of the drama. But in one the woman craves beauty for herself; in the other her desire is to find it in the forbidding face and the dark chamber of her dreadful lord and king."

Post Office is a play of the same category as *Chitra* and *The King of the Dark Chamber* and enjoys the distinction of having been produced on the European stages more often than any other of Tagore's dramas. Besides being of a symbolical and allegorical character, the play is essentially of a mystical and poetical nature. At the same time, its leading characters are very human and individualized to an extent very rare in symbolic drama. The central character is Amal, an innocent and unsophisticated village boy confined to his chamber on account of sickness. His heart is restless in his enforced confinement; and, seated near the window of his room,

he cannot resist the lure of the unknown and the unknowable. For some time he watches the world from the window near his sickbed and holds converse, with those who move up and down the street. A very interesting set these people are. The curd-seller, washerman, the little flower-girl, Sudha, Gaffer the village idler, the village Headman who is a bully—all these go by in a pageant of health and pleasure before the eyes of the sick boy. In his loneliness and the prison of a sick chamber the only solace for Amal is that he has been led to believe that the King himself is going to send him a letter. So he watches with a strange fascination the Post Office across the street and waits in faith and expectation for the King's letter. The theme is developed in two acts. The climax is reached when the King's letter is ushered in just about the time that the soul of Amal has been released from the earthly bondage of the flesh.

It is not so easy to localize definitely the symbolic meanings of this play. Does Amal represent the quest of the human soul after perfection? But no progress is possible in this quest unless there is a response from God. Hence Amal waits for the King's letter. But the first step is gained only after the release of the soul from its earthly prison which is represented here as much by the sick chamber as by the cage of the body. Or, does the play symbolize merely the desire of the human heart to seek the romance of the unknown as an escape from what is usually called sordid reality? In my opinion, it is not correct to put any one definite meaning into this drama;

and its very vagueness lends it a poetic significance transcending other allegories of this type.

The Cycle of Spring is more in the nature of a long dramatic lyric than a drama proper. It depicts in symbolic form the eternal and never-ending conflict between the impulses of life and death. The play opens with a verbal logical bout between the poet and the scholar for the mastery of the king's mind. Then starts a quest for the meaning of life. The principle of life triumphs in the end but only with the realization that the joy in life comes only to him who can give himself away, that through change and death one can find life anew, the same message that a great and supersensitive English poet found in the ravings of the wild West Wind. Fittingly enough, the play closes with a song of the festival of spring.

Among the shorter plays that were translated into English during the early years of the present century the more striking or noteworthy are *Sacrifice, Sanyasi, Malini, The King and the Queen* and *Karna and Kunti.* Nearly all these are plays of ideas, each being based on a central theme. *Sacrifice,* as its title signifies, deals with the agesold custom of offering human or animal *sacrifice* at the altars of the gods. The scene is the ancient kingdom of Tippera and the play presents a tangible human conflict of opposed groups of characters - those who are for offering sacrifice and those who are against the custom. The play moves up to a dramatic climax of exceptional intensity.

In *Sanyasi* Tagore deals with the eternal problem whether mere renunciation of the world can lead to one's peace of mind. The ascetic who prided himself on the conviction that he had secured release from the bonds of human attachment is startled to find his heart melt with paternal lover towards an out caste fatherless girl. He runs away from her to seek salvation in the contemplation of the infinite but remains disconsolate. A selfless attachment for a human being lures him back to a world which he had believed he had lost and forsaken.

In *Malini*, a play in two acts, is depicted a triangular conflict between Religion, Love, and Friendship. Kemankar suspects that his friend Supriya has offered the faith of his fathers to the eyes of Malini, the daughter of the King, who has become a Buddhist zealot. Kemankar revolts against the King's authority and is hauled up for treason. But before accepting the punishment due to a traitor he crushes his friend to death in the presence of the King and the court. *The King and the Queen* presents a conflict between love and honour and leads to a tragic denouement. The discarded love of Queen Sumitra and the humbled pride of Kumarsen find ultimate relief in death.

Karna and Kunti, based on an incident in the *Mahabharata*, can hardly be called a drama. It is a dialogue between Kunti and Karna in which is revealed the supremely noble character of the latter, the self-made soldier-prince who was discarded at this birth by his mother Kunti because he was born out of wedlock when

she was still at her father's home. Kunti later became the Queen of Pandav and the mother of the famous Pandavas. Her renowned warrior sons are unaware of the relation in which Karna stands to their relentless enemy, Duryodhana. On the eve of battle, in the agony of her heart, Kunti secretly approaches her first born and begs of him to spare the lives of her children and to come and take his rightful place at the head of his brothers. Karna, the proud soldier, disowned and cast away at his birth, rises to the occasion and refuses to forsake the side of Duryodhana. The dialogue ends with these noble and prescient words addressed by him to his mother :-

"Mother, have no fear: I know for certain that victory awaits the Pandavas. Ask me not to leave those who are doomed to defeat. On the night of my birth you left me - naked and unnamed- to disgrace; leave me once again without pity to the calm expectation of defeat and death."

The plays considered so far were produced either towards the closing years of the last century or the first decades of the present century. These were later translated into English and thus had a wide circulation among the reading public, especially after Rabindranath Tagore attained international fame consequent on his winning the much-coveted Nobel Prize for Literture. But Tagore wrote several more plays during the declining years of his life. The most noteworthy among these are *Mukta-Dhara (1922), Natir Puja (1925)*, and *Chandalika (1923)*. The se appeared in 1922 and 1938 either in *The Modern Review*

or *Visva-Bharati*. In 1950 appeared one volume translation of these dramas by Marjorie Sykes under the title *Three Plays*, published by Oxford University Press. Any discussion of Tagore's contribution to the domain of dramatic literature would be inadequate without a brief analysis of these plays.

Mukta-Dhara gives expression to the author's political convictions in a drama of tense poignancy. The play takes its name from a mountain spring whose waters, rushing down slopes of Uttarakut, ought to irrigate the plains of Shiv-Tarai. The people of Shiv-Tarai are held in subjection by the King of Uttarkut, who wants to enforce this subjection by erecting, through the skill of the royal engineer Bidhuti, a great dam to prevent the life-giving waters of Mukta-dhara from reaching, the plains below. The play opens with a scene in which the king and the people of Uttarkut have gathered to celebrate the successful completion of the project of the dam through conscripted labour and with loss of many poor labourers' lives in the process. On this occasion of their success both the king and the people are completely unmindful of the vital interests of the poor and defenseless people of Shiv-Tarai. In fact, they are gloating over the fact that these people will now be completely at the mercy of their imperialist masters. The Crown Prince Abhijit, who is a symbol of the spirit of liberty, however, espouses the cause of the down-trodden people of the plains and protests publicly against the soulless achievement of Bhibhuti. This emotional attitude of the Prince gains

further intensity when he learns that he is not really the son of the king but a foundling picked up near the source of the Mukta-dhara. So he determines to come to the rescue of the oppressed people of Shiv-Tarai and to liberate the imprisoned waters of the mountain stream, by forcing the dam at a secret weak point known to him. This proves to be a risky undertaking. The Prince succeeds in his object, but he is drowned in the waters of the stream when the leaping current breaks free in a turbulent rush. The social and political meaning of the play is thus dissolved in a sense of mystic fulfilment for the chief character of the drama.

Another interesting character in the play is the ascetic Dhananjaya who teaches the people of Shiv-Tarai to resist the unjust policies of their imperialist ruler through non-violence. The play is one of the most well constructed and intensely moving dramas by Rabindranath Tagore. It is also rich in meaning and capable of a variety of interpretations. The ideas and situations are refreshingly modern, and here the author seems to envisage and anticipate many now much-too-familiar developments in India and the rest of the world.

Natir Puja is a play simple and moving in conception and execution and comparatively free from the symbolic complexities, intellectual abstractions, and mystical puzzles that we generally associate with most of Tagore's dramas. The story is based on a Buddhist legend relating to the life of King Bimbisara (c 546=494 B.C.), a contemporary of Lord Buddha. To quote from

Rajendralal Mitra's version of the legend : "Raja Bimbisara receiving the knowledge of truth from the Lord had built a big stupa over the Lord's nails and hairs in his zenana and his maids cleansed the place every day. When his son, Ajatasatru, obtained the throne by parricide, he prohibited the females to sweep the stupa on pain of death. Srimati, a female slave, caring not at all for her life, washed it neatly and lighted it with a row of lamps. The king, in great rage, ordered her to the place of execution. According to another tradition Bimbisara is said to have renounced the world and handed over the kingdom voluntarily to his son, Ajatasatru. For purposes of drama, Tagore draws upon these traditions.

The central character of the play is *Srimati*, the Nati (the palace-dancer), who in definace of the court regulation is chosen by the order to offer worship at the shrine of the Buddha on Vasanta Purnima Day, the birthday of the Buddha. This privilege had hitherto been reserved for a princess. Consequently, Ratnavali, one of the royal princesses, in highly incensed at the idea of a low-born maiden receiving this distinction; and thus to the religious interest of the drama is added the human interest of jealousy. In defiance of the royal order, however, Srimati dances before the stupa, and her dance turns into an intense expression of religious ecstasy, at the end of which the dancer meets her death with a smiling countenance. The scene is so moving that it melts even the heart of Ratnavali. In the meanwhile, Bimbisara is murdered by the king's men. Ajatasatru, frightened at the consequences of this great crime, is overcome with remorse and revokes his policy of persecution of the

followers of the new faith.

It is not probably correct to hold that in this play Tagore desired to establish the superiority of the Buddha's religion to other current religious practices of the time. Obviously, he is mainly interested in the historical and human aspects of the story. Much more, the play gives expression to one of Tagore's intensely held beliefs that the real face of God is revealed to those who identify themselves with the humblest and the most oppressed of God's creatures. This, in fact, is the theme of one of the most moving songs in *Gitanjali*, beginning with the line, "Here is thy foot-stool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest and lowliest and lost."

Chandalika is a short drama based on another well known Buddhist legend. Ananda, the famous disciple of Buddha, was one day returning from a journey and felt extremely thirsty on the way. He passed by a well at which a Chandalika (an out-caste girl), Prakriti by name, was drawing water. He took water from her hands and his thirst was quenched. But the untouchable girl fell in love with him. She went to her mother, who was well-versed in the art of black magic, and prevailed upon her to entice to her the beautiful young monk by the spell of her magic. The spell proved so powerful that, much against his will, Anada was drawn to Prakrati's humble abode. But, just when he was about to succumb to the overpowering passion of lust, he prayed to the Lord to save him from the predicament. His prayer was answered, the magic spell was broken, and he was thus enabled to leave

Prakriti's cottage as pure as he had entered it. In the sequel the mother expires and the lustful Prakriti is chastened and led on to the path of virtue and piety.

It is a short play mainly comprising a dialogue between Prakriti and her mother about the ways of Buddhist monks. Yet the crude elements of an old legend have been transformed by the author into a situation of intense psychological, spiritual, and dramatic interest. Prakriti, as depicted in the play, is not a mere creature of passion; she is portrayed as an extremely sensitive human being who discovers her own human dignity, her tender womanhood, and ultimately her spiritual destiny, by coming into contact with the compassionate and spiritually exalted disciple of the Buddha every day.

To conclude, it may safely be adduced that any survey of Tagore's plays leaves the definite impression that they belong to a class by themselves. They are basically dramas of ideas. Characters are often symbols or types; and dramatic action, more often than not, belongs to the realms of the mind and the spirit. Aristotle, while analysing Greek literature of his time, laid great stress on the importance of great action in the drama and the epic. But Aristotle was dealing with the literary types known to the Greeks of his time and could not visualize modern literary forms. In Tagore's plays, as has been seen, it would be in vain to look for great action or even conflict of an obvious character. On the other hand, he is preoccupied with moral, metaphysical, and spiritual problems. His dramas are beyond the confines of time

and space. The Tippera of *Sacrifice* and the Kashmir of *The King and the Queen* are mere pegs round which he hangs his abstract themes. While he carries forward the spirit and ancient traditions of Indian play-writing, his technique and out-look have also been coloured by his close acquaintance with modern European drama. All things considered, it appears, however, difficult to claim for Tagore a supremely pre-eminent position in modern dramatic literature. But there is no doubt that his dramatic output marks a definite stage in the literary Renaissance in Bengal on the basis of which considerable progress can be achieved in the realm of drama by succeeding generations of men and women devoted to the task of literary creation.

from The Jammu and Kashmir University

Review

Srinagar

Variety of Styles in Shakespeare

(with special reference to *Hamlet*)

The close of the First World War was marked by a distinct tendency to break the idols built up by the Romantic Movement and to debunk even several of the till-then-universally-accepted masters of the literary art. It will not be an easy task to analyse the social forces that favoured the growth of such trends in literary criticism nor to investigate how far this movement was related to the development of a new type of poetry that deliberately cut itself adrift from the traditions of the preceding hundred and fifty years. In any case, no such thing is intended here. Only it may be relevant to observe that, though a tendency to reassess the value of the work of the romantics has been noticeable since the turn of the half century, yet the demolishing trend has by no means completely exhausted itself. In this context, reference may be made to a very recent work by Robert Graves, a poet of considerable merit, who in his *Steps* (an anagramatic title for Stories, Talks, Essays, Poems and Studies) has indulged in the pastime of denouncing some of the most treasured poems of our youth. Among these works which he attempts to tear to pieces are such traditional favourites as Milton's L' *Allegro* and Wordsworth's *Solitary Reaper*. He does not spare even T.S. Eliot and tries to be-little what some have come to regard as the finest lines in his *Sweeney Erect*. This demonstrates that the tendency has reached a

stage where even some of the leading demolishers may have to face the most scathing kind of criticism from their contemporaries.

It may be asked how Shakespeare has emerged out of this process. Again, it is not the purpose here to deal with this question of Shakespeare evaluation at any length. But a few observations in this connection may not be irrelevant. It is well-known that by the close of the nineteenth century Shakespeare criticism generally had almost reached in England a stage of Shakespeare worship. An interesting parallel to this phase is provided in the history of European criticism by the German eulogising of Shakespeare about the middle of the eighteenth century. So in the new age of criticism Shakespeare naturally became a convenient and massive target for this demolishing process. All the same, Shakespeare's reputation has emerged triumphant out of this phase of new evaluation of literary achievement. This was not unexpected, because Shakespeare's genius, his art and his greatness as a writer are founded on such solid bases that no adverse criticism can ever succeed in pulling these down. One such factor in Shakespeare's intrinsic greatness is his complete mastery of his language, his almost absolute power over the medium of his expression. He is, in fact, one of the acknowledged makers of the English language. In other words, his has been by far the largest contribution to the making of this language which, mainly after the advent of Shakespeare, became such a rich and powerful means of expressing effectively some

of the subtlest nuances of human thought and experience. It is not possible to discuss here all the aspects of this question of Shakespeare's astounding command over his language. It should suffice here to discuss and illustrate in some detail only one aspect of it, that is, the variety of styles as presented in *Hamlet*, generally acknowledged as one his greatest plays if not undisputedly his chief masterpiece.

There are, of course, innumerable ways in which a literary artist can demonstrate his power of handling his language. Take, in the case of Shakespeare, for example, the sheer extensiveness of his vocabulary. Such a phenomenon cannot be a matter of chance or accident. It is a test of that indefinable something in human nature which we term *genius*. As regards the question of variety of styles, that is, to a certain extent, a sheer artistic necessity even with a second rate dramatist. But if we look at this aspect of dramatic art with reference to Shakespeare, on the basis of our knowledge of even one play, it will easily establish how vastly superior he is to the common run of dramatists and poets.

In dramatic dialogue the broadest distinction that is presented in Shakespeare's plays is between prose and verse. As a matter of common knowledge, in his mature plays Shakespeare uses blank verse with iambic pentameter as the normal medium of dialogue. Prose is used only on special occasions for special reasons, as, for instance, to indicate the comparatively lower social status of a character or the non-serious nature of a particular

scene or situation. Prose is also used to present letters and other written documents. But what is remarkable about Shakespeare is that, apart from these two broad divisions of his dramatic dialogue, he often presents wide varieties of style both in verse and prose, especially in those of his plays which are the products of his fully developed artistic genius. It may be of some interest to illustrate this in some detail from the text of *Hamlet*.

Let us first consider the verse forms in this play. The normal medium, of course, is blank verse in iambic pentameter. Usually the blank verse in Hamlet has a flow and a dignity which shows the author at his best in the handling of this kind of verse. Here is an example at random :

I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu !
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time-as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest-O, I could tell you-
But let it be, Horatio, I am dead,
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied

But in the play within the play he uses a stilted kind of rhymed verse :-

So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count over ere love be done !
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you, Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must ;
For women's fear and love holds quantity;
In neither aught, or in extremely.

These couplets with their not-always-adequate rhymes, seem to render this dialogue extremely formal and lifeless. Probably this was meant to bring home to us the highly artificial spirit of *The Murder of Gonzago.*

Then, in the whole range of blank verse in *Hamlet,* there is a famous and controversial passage which *Hamlet* makes the First Player recite in Act II, Scene 2. The passage opens with the following lines :-

The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now his dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal, head to foot
Now is he total gules, horridly tricked
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their lord's murder; roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus over-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

Most of Shakespeare's critics have been intrigued by the bombastic style of this passage and have wondered what artistic or other considerations prompted Shakespeare to put it in its context. They have not always agreed in their views. Some have considered these lines as burlesque, meant to be quoted by Hamlet in irony. It has also been suggested that here Shakespeare wanted to present a contrast between the epic and the dramatic types of blank verse. Or, was Shakespeare trying to parody Marlowe and Nash, with reference to their *Dido, Queen of*

Carthage ? Says Coleridge, "The fancy that a burlesque was intended sinks below criticism; the lines, as epic narrative, are superb. Schlegal considered that bombast was necessary to a play within a play. He says, This extract must not be judged by itself, but in connection with the place where it is introduced. To distinguish it as dramatic poetry in the play itself, it was necessary that it should rise above its dignified poetry in the same proportion that the theatrical elevation does above simple nature." It is not easy to adjudge which of these explanations is entirely satisfactory. It is obvious, however, that Shakespeare could shift from style to style even in five-foot blank verse with the greatest ease and that in this particular case he had in view some deep aesthetic purpose.

Let us now consider the normal type of dialogue in the play. It is amazing to observe the measure of variety presented here. First, there may be noted, on occasions, a marked difference among the speeches of certain characters conditioned in relation to the reaction of each of them to a particular situation. In the following piece of dialogue, for instance, the contrast between the obvious excitement of Hamlet and the unhurried calm and rock-like self-control of Horatio is very clearly indicated :-

Hamlet. Then saw you not his face?
Horatio. Oh, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.
Hamlet. What, looked he frowningly?
Haratio. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
Hamlet. Pale or red?
Horatio. Nay very pale.
Horatio. Most constantly.

(Act. I. Scene 2)

It should be an interesting exercise to analyse the apparently very simple tricks of language employed here to bring out the contrast between the tone and temper of the two characters. But what astounds a student of Shakespeare is the apparent ease and naturalness and lack of effort with which he seems to produce such effects.

Take another instance. All those who may have read this play with the attention that it deserves must have noticed how it does not take long for the penetrating perspicacity of Hamlet to sense the nature of the nefarious mission of spying on him on which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been called to the court at Elsinore. So Hamlet always tries to play an assumed role in their presence. In Act III, Scene 2. he rather curtly dismisses them from his presence. Having got rid of them, to his great relief, he encounters Horatio; and the sudden shifting of his mood from the two false friends to a true one is reflected in a passage of surpassing beauty :-

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou has't been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast taken with equal thanks; and blest are those
Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave. and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.

Incidentally, we are here enabled to have a glimpse

into the inner nature of Hamlet, of what he might have been if the chances and the changes of life had proved to him kinder than they actually were.

We may next consider how Shakespeare often varies the style of speech in the case of the same character according to the changing situation or mood of that character. For this purpose, it might prove most revealing to examine the speeches of Claudius in Act 1, Scene 2. Consider the nature of Claudius. No character in Shakespeare, possibly not even Iago, wears the mask of hypocrisy with such consummate skill and success as does Claudius. What might be called the "formal dignity" of his style is so obvious when he addresses himself to the members of his Council :-

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe.
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as't were with a defeated joy-
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,-
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

It is interesting to note how, soon after, this icy correctness of formality seems to melt away when the King speaks of Laertes :-

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice. What would thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?

In Act III, scene 1, however, the mask is lifted for a moment and alone, face to face with his conscience, the real feelings of Claudius are revealed and his speech rises to the level of poetry :-

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastered art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word;
O heavy burthen!

Later, after the play scene, praying in his closet, Claudius certainly rises above himself and his feelings find expression in language of an exalted kind :-

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon it,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will;
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound.
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood.
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? *(Act III,Scene 3)*

In relation to the subject of this paper it would be of interest to study some of the speeches of Gertrude and the contrasts that these present. In the early stages of the

play we seem to associate a certain quality with the character of Gertrude: and, consequently, her speeches generally assume a lazy and lethargic style. This is how she addresses herself to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern :-

Good gentleman, he hath much talked of you;
And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile.
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks.
As fits a king's remembrance.

(*Act II. Scene 2.*)

But, in the course of the play, Gerutrude too passes through the crucible of suffering, being thus partly purged of her coarseness and sensulaity; and, in marked contrast to the passage quoted above, her account of the death of Ophelia touches a very high level of lyric beauty :-

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream,
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophics and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress.
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till, that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

From a close analysis of the verse of the play, it is clear that *Hamlet* contains a large number of great poetic speeches. On the other hand, it is also interspersed with a good deal of faulty or indifferent verse. But these lapses into medicority of style should not be interpreted as lack of attention on the part of the great dramatist. A deeper study of the play will easily establish that these passages have nearly always some dramatic justification or other.

A consideration of this aspect of the language and versification of *Hamlet* may, therefore, enable us to look upon this play from a more correct perspective.

Before this discussion is closed, it may be of some interest to dwell briefly on the varied types of prose styles found in the dialogues of *Hamlet*. In this connection it may be kept in mind that *Hamlet*, among other things, is a picture of court life. Hamlet, Polonius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Osric and Horatio, all are courtiers. Their speeches are generally characterized by affectation and euphimism. To illustrate this, it would be greatly rewarding to study the speeches of Osric in Act V, Scene 2. Here is a characteristic piece :-

Osric, Nay, my lord: for mine ease, in good faith,
Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes: believe me,
an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,
of very soft society and great showing; indeed, to speak feelingly of him,
he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the
continent of what part a gentleman would be.

In the scene of the grave-diggers (Act V. Scene 1) most probably this type of affectation of speech is

intended to be parodied in the dialogue of a set of lower characters. Says the first clown to his companion :-

Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade, there is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

In this context a study of the prose speeches of Hamlet himself will also prove very interesting. Hamlet makes fun of this affected style by successfully imitating Osric in passages like the following :-

Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you : though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory; and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But in the verity of extolment, I take his to be a soul of great article: and his infusion of such dearth and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblance is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

(Act V, Scene 2.)

But that he too was once addicted to this type of affectation is amply illustrated from his letters to Ophelia. A few brief quotations will make this clear :-

"To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautiful Ophelia,"-

... ...

"In her excellent white bosom, these etc."

... ...

"O dear Ophelia; I am ill at these numbers: I have not art to reckon my groans : but that I love thee best. O most best, believe it, Adieu. "Thine ever more, most dear lady, while this machine is to him, Hamlet."

The study of the prose speeches of Hamlet is by itself

a fascinating revelation. The frequently changing moods of this puzzling character are reflected in the varied styles of his prose. Many of his prose speeches, at the same time, demonstrate his vast intellectual superiority to all those who surround him at the court. This intellectual superiority of his, it is obvious, is a result of his mental suffering. This aspect of the subject gives us an insight into the nature of that elusive mystery that lies at the root of all great human speech and thought.

It has been suggested that in point of style *Hamlet* is a composite play. But this is by no means the only play of Shakespeare in which variations of style in prose and verse are closely linked with purposes of dramatic revelation. Practically all his mature dramas illustrate this special trait of his artistic sensibility. Besides *Hamlet*, plays like Much *Ado About Nothing*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* also present ample varieties of dialogue, In *King Lear*, on the other hand, often the compelling power of poetic passion over-masters the strict artistic requirements of dramatic speech. *Hamlet* is apparently an extreme example, so far as varieties of language are concerned. Probably the reasons for this are the unique versatility of the hero and the tendency to indulge in criticism by Hamlet, Polonius and other characters. In any case, it may be conceded that a study in the widely varied nature of the dramatic dialogue of Shakespeare is by itself as fascinating a topic of study as any relating to the deeper meaning of his plays.

from The J&K University

Review, Srinagar

Decline of the Hero

A distinctive characteristic of the present age, as revealed in its literary trends and the outlook of historiographers world over, is what may be described as "the decline of the hero". In fact, there has been noticed a clear tendency among the modern intellectuals to challenge the cult of the hero. Before attempting any brief analysis of this movement, it might be helpful to say a few words about the traditional propensity of humankind to be dazzled by the glamour of the superman.

The human desire to worship a superior fellow being is, in fact, very deep-rooted and ancient. It has probably its origins in the general thinking of the primitive tribal society which depended for its stability upon the superior strength and ability of the tribal leader, It is possibly this kind of thinking that led the primitive man to create nature myths personifying natural forces as gods and goddesses. When it is affirmed that this tendency to obey and venerate an outstanding tribal chief ultimately evolved into the institutions of hereditary monarchy with its corollory of the divinity of kings, we are obviously on firmer ground. This type of attitude in course of time led to the glorification of war and to the deification of kings and successful war lords as symbols of national pride.

It is clear that these primitive attitudes towards the hero among lesser men were in due course embodied in

the literary and historical traditions of later ages. The basic idea of what is called the epic of growth, like the *Iliad* or the *Mahabharta*, is to extol the powers and virtues of supermen. In course of time these literary traditions coloured men's thinking on recording of history. Apparently the basis of this kind of thinking is rooted in the fundamental intellectual and physical inequalities prevalent among the human species and the all-but-universal helplessness of mankind in the face of disasters resulting from the invisible forces of nature or from the actions of human beings themselves.

Obviously, neither the ancient social organizations, depending for their day-to-day functioning on mass slave labour (as in ancient Greece) or on a rigid caste system (as in ancient India), nor the mediaeval society based on an unjust feudal system, with the intellectual leadership monopolized in each case by the ruling minority groups, could raise a banner of revolt against the cult of the hero. The first indications of a break from this tradition were provided in modern times in eighteenth century Europe where intellectual leadership was now passing into the hands of the talented members of the middle classes. Thus was born the slogan of the equality of all men, enshrined in the doctrinal principles of the American Constitution and well-nigh replacing the need of religion in the first stormy and exuberant phase of the French Revolution. There is no doubt that the ideas, made familiar by the French humanists of the eighteenth century and embodied in their state structure by the founding fathers of the great

American republic provided the first setback to the ages-old conception of the need and importance of the heroic man in human society. There is no doubt, moreover, that the literary trends and historical thinking of succeeding generations in Europe and America were greatly modified by the impact of these new forces in the progress of human civilization.

About the middle of the nineteenth century, the cult of the hero, however, was strongly revived and reinforced by the ideas of a great English thinker and writer, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). Carlyle brought his vigorous intellect and powerful pen to bear upon his exposition of the cult of hero-worship. In his biographies of Frederick the Great and Oliver Cromwell he forcefully expounded the theory that human history was merely a record of the deeds and achievements of its heroes whose genius revealed itself in great action as in the case of Napoleon, whom he described as a poet in action, or in creative art as in the case of Shakespeare, whom he called a hero of poetic creation. But while Carlyle was so forcefully expounding his favourite theories, there were other great influences at work tending to question and contradict these theories. Some of these may be briefly mentioned now.

There is no doubt that one of the greatest thinkers of the last century was Karl Marx, whose ideas have left an indelible stamp on all collective and individual thinking of succeeding generations all over the world. The impact of his thinking has, in fact, been felt even by those intellectuals who most dis-agreed with him. In the context

of this essay, the most impressive of his ideas was his interpretation of history as an interplay of economic and social forces. When human history is reduced to the various phases of class struggle, it is clear that the importance of an individual human being, however distinguished and great, pales into almost a kind of insignificance. Whether we accept this interpretation of history in its entirety or not, there is no doubt that it has a good deal of scientific thinking in it. Naturally, it has deeply influenced our present-day thinking in many fields and left its impress on different branches of literature in our times. But, before any attempts are made to give some salient illustrations of these influences, it may be necessary to mention at least one great writer of the nineteenth century, Henrik Ibsen of Norway, whose contribution towards revolutionizing men's minds today may be regarded almost as great as that of Karl Marx himself.

Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906) has been called the creator of a new kind of drama in European literary tradition. This has been sometimes called "social drama", as it deals with invisible social forces and problems rather than with heroes and heroines of the traditional pattern. The central figures of his plays are invariably playthings in the hands of forces beyond their control. It is a far cry, indeed, from Aristotle's conception of the epic and the dramatic hero and the towering protagonists of Shakespeare's tragic plays. Ibsen's great drama and his whole conception of human character led to a revival of dramatic creation all over Europe, and in England George

Bernard Shaw was the first great child of this new literary and intellectual movement.

Between Ibsen's death and the present day the world has witnessed two global wars, mighty political and social revolutions sweeping over vast regions of Europe, Asia and Africa, leading to the virtual collapse of the traditional ways of thinking in many spheres of human activity. These stupendous developments have led to the disruption of many time-honoured social and ethical values and almost destroyed men's faith in religion and convention. Certitude of the early days of the present century has given place to disillusionment and cynicism. In this process one of the chief casualties has been the hero cult propounded so vociferously and with such arrogance of conviction by Thomas Carlyle hardly a century and a half ago. It may be of some interest now to illustrate these developments as they have been revealed in the literature of our time.

I have already mentioned in passing George Bernard Shaw, who openly acknowledged his debt to his master, Henrik Ibsen. A perusal of Shaw's plays leaves a general impression of the futility of human ideals, and life is presented in them sometimes as a huge hoax or farce. He tried to present on the stage celebrated historical personages like Julius Ceasar, Cleopatra, and Napoleon, only to expose and ridicule their so-called greatness. Even Joan of Arc, though delineated with comparative sympathy, does not appear to escape unscathed from this process. Similarly, when we consider the central

characters of John Galsworthy's plays and novels, they hardly ever impress us as "heroes" and "heroines" except in a conventional sense; and their helplessness against the hostile circumstances of life is not un-often most pathetic.

A very convenient literary instance in point may be furnished by that freak of a modern novel by James Joyce, called *Ulysses,* The very title of the book is somewhat ironical. While the whole symbolism of the so-called "plot" of the novel suggests superficially a faithful parallelism from the ancient Homeric epic, it is mainly an attempt at complete reproduction of the actions and thoughts, the dreams and the whole process of the subconscious mind of an individual covering a period of a night and a day in the life of a Dubliner, and replete with all its sordid and naked and most unheroic details. Even the supposedly more elevated and more ethereal plane of poetic creation has not remained un-affected by this trend to debunk old conceptions, as was first amply put forth in the early twenties of the present century by T.S. Eliot in a well-known poem, called appropriately *The Wasteland,* verily an epic of the incurable frustration of the modern man.

This tendency has been felt noticeably in the biographical literature of the present century, especially in the biographies produced between the two great wars of our time. Here it may suffice to mention only three great writers, Lytton Strachey of England, Andre Maurois of France, and Emil Ludwig, who was once a German

but was hounded out of his home-country by the Nazis for the unpardonable crime of having been born a Jew. As is well known, in English biographical writing a pattern was once set by James Boswell and later improved upon by Carlyle, namely, to idealize and extol the subject. Now we see that Lytton Strachey in his *Queen Victoria* and Emil Ludwig in his *Napoleon* try to take an objective view of things, and their handling of their themes is considerably shorn of the emotional aura gathered around these celebrities in the course of several generations.

Nor has the Indian literature of our time escaped the impact of these new trends. Let us consider just two instances, of Rabindranath Tagore and Munshi Prem Chand. Though both were considerably imbued with traditional ideas of what was good or bad for literary creation, very often both of them discard these time-worn conceptions of literary heroes and turn their attention to humble village folk, or even to creatures rejected by human society. These trends are, in fact, more marked among later writers in practically all the modern Indian languages.

It is not possible for me to recapitulate here how far these influences have affected the current outlook and thinking on human history. But even in the works of some at least of the prominent Indian historians of our time there may be noticed a marked tendency to lay less of stress on our emotional glorification of events and individuals and more of it on the ebb and tide of peoples and institutions and social currents of history. As I

observed at the start, it is, however, by no means certain that the mass of mankind today is even partially cured of the instinct to worship the so-called great men of history or legend. The late Aldous Huxley, easily one of the greatest thinkers and intellectuals of our time, lamented a few years ago the fact that there was still an undiminished demand for new biographical books on Napoleon Bonapart, indicating that human society was still at a considerable distance from a stage when it will not permit itself to be trampled under the iron heels of a Hitler or a Mussolini. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the process of revolt, at least among the intellectuals, against the cult of hero-worship has registered a tremendous advance since the first indications of such a reaction were revealed in the world of European thought more than two centuries ago.

Broadcast from Jalandhar

in the series "For the Universities"

Treatment of Religion in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*

To any casual student of Thomas Hardy it is clear that his last novel, *Jude the Obscure*_ (published in 1895), was, among other things, a tremendous and passionate expression of social protest, much more explosive in its impact on the minds of the Victorians than *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was destined to be, for some-what different reasons, for a later generation of reading public. The sound and fury provoked by *Jude* may appear a rather primitive and puerile reaction in the context of social thinking today. Nevertheless, many dispassionate students of literature may now feel that this exposition of social satire is a little overdone by Hardy in *Jude* and that, artistically speaking, the result is not as satisfactory as, say, in *Tess of the D' Urbervilles*. In spite of such criticism, *Jude the Obscure* remains a great masterpiece of human expression, for flawlessness has never seriously been claimed as a criterion for genuine greatness in literary art; and there is no doubt that *Jude's* creator put his whole soul into its making to an extent that may not be claimed even for *Tess*.

Jude the Obscure raises many fundamental questions which have stirred the minds of men since the time they began to think consciously of the problems of human existence. But the book fails to give any clear-cut answers to most of these questions. On the other hand, some of the leading questions posed by *Tess* are, by comparison,

susceptible to solutions. Not so in the case of *Jude*. It retains to the end the unfathomable incomprehensibility and mystery of life itself. Moreover, as another unfailing sign of its intrinsic greatness, the novel presents a wide variety of mood and incident that age cannot wither nor custom stale.

Among the many other fundamental issues of social living raised in *Jude* may be listed Hardy's attitude towards religion, towards the basic doctrinal forms of Western Christianity as practised and believed in by most of his contemporaries. It is evident that a dominating feature of the novel, as represented in the shifting opinions and attitudes of its two principal characters (Jude Fawley and Susana Bridehead), is an exposition of a persistent antagonism between the conventional Christian way of life and a certain kind of agnosticism that may be termed paganism, for want of a better word.

To begin with, in his comparative ignorance both of life and book-learning, Jude sets much store by the Christian doctrine and for many years dreams passionately of acquiring, at the leading traditional seat of learning and religious orthodoxy in England, the necessary academic qualifications for becoming a regular pastor of the Anglican Church. But, as his creator has hinted at very early in the novel, deep down in his consciousness Jude feels an irresistible fascination for some vague kind of pre-Christian paganism. During his initial painful efforts to acquire unaided a working

knowledge of Greek and Latin, we are told, the only time that Jude could attend to his lessons was while driving his aunt's cart loaded with bread to be distributed among her customers in the neighbouring countryside, while the horse found his way as best as he might in the semi-darkness of an early dawn or the dim twilight of an evening. Says the novelist :

"On a day when Fawley was getting quite advanced, being now about sixteen, and had been stumbling through the 'Carmen Saeculare', on his way home, he found himself to be passing over the high edge of the plateau by the Brown House. The light had changed, and it was the sense of this which had caused him to look up. The sun was going down, and the full moon was rising simultaneously behind the woods in the opposite quarter. His mind had become so impregnated with the poem that he stopped the horse, alighted, and glancing round to see that nobody was in sight, knelt down on the roadside bank with open book. He turned first to the shiny goddess, who seemed to look so softly and critically at his doings, then to the disappearing luminary on the other hand, as he began :

'Phoebe silvarumque potens Diana!'

"The horse stood still till he had finished the hymn, which Jude repeated under the sway of a polytheistic fancy that he would never have thought of humouring in broad daylight."

But this feeling is still vague, instinctive, and

incipient; and Jude has to travel long before he ceases to have a blind faith in the established order of things. As against this, Sue Bridehead, from her very first appearance in the novel, strikes one as an intellectually incurable and supremely self-confident nonconformist. Even before she meets Jude, she has to go through an experience that leads to a minor crisis in her otherwise placid course of existence at Christminster. In this novel, by 'Christminster Hardy' means Oxford, the most rigid centre of Christiain orthodoxy. While taking a solitary afternoon stroll into the countryside outside the university town, she comes across on the road a black-haired foreigner carrying for sale a number of plaster statuettes. After examining his wares closely for some time, she purchases from him a Venus and an Apollo and covertly, almost with a feeling of guilt, carries this 'heathen load into the most Christian city in the country' and to the secrecy of her chamber, evasively telling her sanctimonious landlady, Miss Fontover, that she has just purchased the casts of two saints, St. Peter and Mary Magdalene. Later, when Miss Fontover discovers the identity of these nude figures, she breaks and crushes them under her feet. This leads to a difference between her and Sue who is, as a consequence, driven to leave her lodgings and to seek her cousin, Jude Fawley, for help in this emergency; and , as the readers of the novel know, she then drifts on towards Richard Phillotson. But her spirit at this stage is unbending and she is prepared to stand up to anyone in defence of her honestly held convictions or a lack of them.

It will be seen that during the early days of Sue's association with Jude the latter has to be generally on the defensive before Sue while mentioning anything smacking of Christian affiliations. For instance, once, in the course of their discussion of a programme of sight-seeing, the following conversation takes place, revealing their respective attitudes at this time :

'Well-Wardour Castle. And then we can do Fonthill if we like-all in the same afternoon.'
'Wardour is Gothic ruins-and I hate Gothic!'
'No. Quite otherwise. It is a classic building-Corinthian, I think; with a lot of pictures.'
'Ah-that will do. I like the sound of Corinthian. We'll go.'

Some time later, arguing with Jude on what she regards as the emptiness of the mythical glory of Christminster, Sue expresses herself rather vehemently: 'The mediaevalism of Christminster must go, be sloughed off, or Christminster itself will have to go,' quoting the following line as if to clinch the issue :

O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods!

There follows a lengthy argument ending as given below :

'And what a literary enormity this is,' she said, as she glanced into the pages of Solomon's Song. 'I mean the synopsis at the head of each chapter, explaining away the real nature of that rhapsody. You needn't be alarmed: nobody claims inspiration for the chapter headings. Indeed, many divines treat them with contempt. It seems the drollest thing to think of the four-and-twenty elders,

or bishops, or whatever number they were, sitting with long faces and writing down such stuff.'

Jude looked pained. 'You are quite Voltairean!' he murmured.

'Indeed ? Then I won't say any more, except that people have no right to falsify the Bible ! I hate such humbug as could attempt to plaster over with the ecclesiastical abstractions such ecstatic, natural, human love as lies in that great and passionate song!' Her speech had grown spirited , and almost petulant at his rebuke, and her eyes moist. 'I wish I had a friend here to support me; but nobody is ever on my side!'

'But my dear Sue, my very dear Sue, I am not against you!' he said, taking her hand, and surprised at her introducing personal feeling into mere argument.

As the story progresses, Sue is a little put out to learn that Jude is already married to Arabella and can hardly hide her feelings. When Jude protests that he does not love Arabella and that he has stayed away from her for years, her sarcastic reaction is quite characteristic of her scoffing attitude towards Jude's religiosity at this juncture 'How strange of you to stay apart from her like this! You, such a religious man. How will the demi-gods in your Pantheon-I mean those legendary persons you call saints-intercede for you after this?'

Apparently, in a mood of unthinking desperation, Sue decides to marry Phillotson and informs Jude of this decision by a letter, requesting at the same time to give

her away. The following words of biting sarcasm in this letter are, again, symptomatic of her attitude towards established religion at this stage of her life :

"I have been looking at the marriage service in the Prayer Book and it seems to me very humiliating that a giver-away should be required at all. According to the ceremony as there printed, my bridegroom chooses me of his own will and pleasure; But I don't choose him. Somebody gives me to him, like a she-ass or she-goat, or any other domestic animal. Bless your exalted views of woman, O Churchman !'

In a similar vein, she later speaks of a woman's lawfully married husband as 'the chamber-officer appointed by the bishop's licence to receive her love.'

In due course, Jude's resistance breaks down under the twin pressures of the hammer blows of Sue's rebellious intellect and of his own instinctive propensities, so that he exclaims, 'I'll never care about my doctrines or my religion any more !' And Sue's reaction to this passionate outburst is thoroughly in keeping with the unorthodox views held by her at the time : 'I am certain one ought to be allowed to undo what one had done so ignorantly ! I daresay it happens to lots of women; only they submit, and I kick.... When people of a later age look back upon the barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in, what will they say!'

At long last, Jude and Sue are driven to live together,

to put it in proper Christian phraseology, 'in sin'; for, in spite of Jude's keen desire to have their relationship legalized -both now being free to do so-Sue cannot be brought round to take this step, because she believes that 'legal marriage is a hopelessly vulgar institution.' Jude's baffled comment is rather interesting:

"Sue, you seem when you are like this to be one of the women of some grand old civilization, whom I used to read about in my bygone, wasted, classical days, rather than a denizen of a mere Christian country. I almost expect you to say at these times that you have just been talking to some friend whom you met in the Via Sacra, about the latest news of Octavia or Livia; or have been listening to Aspasia's eloquence, or have been watching Praxiteles chiselling away at his latest Venus, while Phryne made complaint that she was tired of posing."

In the course of the story, till she reaches what may be called the major crisis of her existence in the death of her two children through the agency of that abnormal child of sorrow, Little Father Time, the bitter fruit of the unhappy union between Jude and Arabella, she is the chief exponent of this undercurrent of antagonism towards Christianity. She seems, till then, obsessed with some kind of pagan fatalism which 'makes her feel as if a tragic doom overhung their (Jude's and hers) family, as it did the house of Atreus', so that the flowers in the bride's hand, when they together inadvertently stray into a church where a wedding is on, appear to her perfervid

imagination 'sadly like the garland which decked the heifers of sacrifice in old times.'

So the star-crossed loves argue round and round their problem till Jude, in due course, submits to the vehement and rebellious intellect of Sue. But the tragedy of the children's death, set in ironic contrast against the background of the festivities of Remembrance Week at Christminster, completely unhinges Sue Bridehead. Here Hardy seems to have taken some care to prepare his readers for this strange denouement. For, even before she feels the impact of this dread event, as clear premonition of what is coming, Sue seems to feel a kind of inexplicable fear at a distant sight of Phillotson in the festive crowd outside one of the college buildings. This is what she says to Jude on the occasion :

'Although I know it is all right with our plans, I felt a curious dread of him; an awe, or terror, of conventions I don't believe in. It comes over me at times like a sort of creeping paralysis, and makes me so sad !'

The tragedy of the children's death and the totality of the circumstances attending it completely disrupt some invisible moorings of Sue's deepest spiritual being. Or, is it meant to be a culminating consequence of all the tortures she had already undergone ? Most unexpectedly,she now turns about to an almost superstitious belief in rigid conformity; and, their roles now completely reversed, Jude argues with her that they had done no wrong against Nature or Man or even the

First Cause, whatever the attribute of that Unseen Power may be. But Sue is disconsolate and puts it mournfully :

'We must conform ! All the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been vented upon us, His poor creatures, and we must submit. There is no choice. We must. It is no use fighting against God!"

The reversed argument goes on and on for some time, but leads to no understanding. But, in Sue's case, this mental transformation is never meant to be presented as a genuine conversion, or as one more triumph for the angels and a discomfiture for the Price of Darkness. It is, on the contrary, the woeful spectacle of the complete cracking of an essentially noble soul and a free intellect in their unequal fight against the adverse circumstances of life. In his sorrow Jude bitterly remarks, 'My good heavens-how we change places !' And this remark brings home to us the stark tragedy of the situation.

No vehement pleadings of Jude can now move Sue to change her attitude towards their erstwhile relationship to what Jude rightly regards as "Nature's own marriage.' A little later he adds, 'Can this be the girl who brought the Pagan deities into this most Christian city ? -who mimicked Miss Fontover when she crushed them with her heel? -quoted Gibbon, and Shelley, and Mill ? Where are dear Apollo, and dear Venus now !'

The extremely harrowing nature of this unending argument between the lovers may be contrasted with the comparatively playful mutual raillery of intellectual

companionship of the years gone by. Sue is now bent upon going back to Phillotson, her 'only lawfully wedded spouse', and thus, in the words of Jude, 'doing an immoral thing for moral reasons.' Sensing dimly somehow the enormity of Sue's mental volte-face, the unsophisticated Mrs. Edlin later comments, 'Upon my life, I don't call that religion.' And before this unending controversy between Jude and Sue can be brought to any conclusive understanding, the story moves towards its intensely tragic, close; a premature and forlorn death for Jude and, what is worse, a nightmarish life-in-death for Sue. There is, however, just a little comfort in the last detached comment upon Sue's fate and his own, by Jude, while he resignedly waits for his end under the shadow of the city of his dreams and is uttering some rambling words in the presence of the unlettered but understanding Mrs. Edlin, : 'She was once a woman whose intellect was to mine like a star to a benzoline lamp : who saw all my superstitions as cobwebs that she could brush away with a word. Then bitter affliction came to us, and her intellect broke, and she veered round to darkness. Strange difference of sex, that time and circumstance, which enlarge the views of most men, narrow the views of women almost invariably. And now the ultimate horror has come-her giving herself like this to what she loathes, in her enslavement to forms! - she, so sensitive, so shrinking, that the very wind seemed to blow on her with a touch of deference .... As for Sue and me when we were at our own best, long ago- when our minds were clear, and our love of truth fearless-the

time was not ripe for us. Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us. And so the resistance they met with brought reaction in her, and recklessness and ruin on me !'

Before this analysis of an important aspect of *Jude the Obscure* is brought to a close, one might pause and consider what Hardy's views on religion exactly were. Obviously, his personal belief approximated to some kind of an intellectual paganism and he could not, on his own showing, be regarded as an orthodox Christian. But, surely, one who has expressed with such deep understanding and sympathy the immense sorrows and the little joys of human existence could never be an opponent of the simple Christian ethics based on tolerance, charity, and love. Apparently, what he was up against was the sanctimonious certitude of Christian theology and all the cant and humbug of the so-called Christian way of life as followed in the West. This view may be reinforced by those soul-stirring words addressed by Jude to Sue, at their final parting in the church at Marygreen, when he was going over in retrospect the unmitigated agony of the unresolved crisis of their strange and unconventional mutual relationship. Says he, 'Sue ! we are acting by the letter; and "the letter killeth !" ' Appropriately enough, these scriptural words of deep import, 'The letter killeth', appear also on the title page of the book. Obviously, Hardy intended this to embody the quintessence of the significance of this sombre book.

from "The Indian Journal of English Studies"

A Convocation Address

(Delivered on March 8, 1971, at The Punjab University Evening College, Jalandhar)

Principal Harbhajan Singh, learned members of the teaching faculty of the College, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, graduates of the year ! I cannot express adequately how happy I am to be here with you this glorious spring morning and how grateful I am to the Principal and the staff for having conferred on me the signal honour of inviting me to address you at this Fourth Annual convocation of the College. Having been closely associated for about six and a half years with the growth of this institution during its early formative years, you will excuse me, I trust, when I say that I feel rather emotional on this occasion of my brief re-union with my erstwhile colleagues and students. As some of you may be knowing, I completed about thirty-eight years of unbroken service in the cause of higher eduction when I retired from this College towards the end of July last. It has been my great good fortune that I have hardly ever had any serious difficulties in my dealings with either my colleagues or my students. During this longish span of time I have had the privilege of working with eminent eductionsts and scholars like Mr. K.G. Saiyidain, Dr. Asaf A. Fyzee, the late Mr. K.M. Panikkar, the late and very much lamented Dr. A.C. Joshi, and, lastly, Shri Suraj Bhan,

the present illustrious Vice-Chancellor of the Panjab University. I believe I am not exaggerating things when I claim that never before did I receive such ample and unstinted and afferctionate co-operation from my colleagues and my students as I got at this College and that never did I feel so happy with the working administrative conditions as I did while I had the privilege of serving under the guidance of your present Vice-Chancellor. This last phase of my professional career has been, on the whole, the most rewarding and pleasing for me. Now when I find that all the persons who work here, from the Principal and the staff to ths students and Class IV employees, hold me in rare affection after my retirement, you will kindly understand how moved I feel on this occasion and excuse this rather pronounced personal note in my address. As you may easily understand, it is to me almost like a home-coming after a temporary absence; and I am mightily pleased to note that this institution is making commendable and steady progress under the able and dedicated stewardship of Principal Harbhajan Singh.

On an occasion like this, probably one is expected to dwell upon some of the acute and complex problems that face us today in the sphere of educational activity in this country. I must confess that I feel rather hesitant in venturing any considered views on these problems. I feel that I belong to a generation whose role, for good or for ill, is played out and that we now need younger and more energetic , and more dynamic persons to tackle the

problems that confront us today. Nevertheless, I may venture a few observations for what they are worth and I may assure you that I will not be very long at it.

First, about what I regard as the need for expanding liberal and professional education in the present socio-economic context in this country. We hear it being said often these days that our present educational system breeds unemployment, leading to enormous discontent and frustration among the youth. As we all know, a large number of even our engineering graduates are today rusting in idleness. Ultimately, the remedy to such maladjustments lies in a proper and close co-ordination between our educational and industiral planning ; and it certainly needs no extraordinary perspicacity to say that during the past decade our state machinery has miserably failed to provide for this essential co-ordination in our developing economy. All the same, the question remains, "Are we really having too much of higher education in this country?" Considering the vast needs of our teeming millions, my answer is an emphatic "No". I am not sufficiently qualified to speak about the scope for engineers in this country, but I believe that the work of development that faces us in our villages should easily absorb more than double the number of ordinary graduates (in Arts and Science) and medical and engineering graduates that our universities, many of them hastily assembled together, produce today. For, the masses in the countryside need, not only electric power, good roads, tractors, seeds of superior quality, tube wells

and so forth. All these are no doubt essential and urgent requirements. But let us not forget that our rural population needs, in addition, almost as urgently the light of basic education and the amenities of basic hygienic and medical facilities. This is a tremendous task which can easily absorb a vast army of ordinary and medical graduates. The tragedy of our planning has been, apart from the colossal government failures, that our ordinary graduats tend to refuse to work in the villages. I have no ready-made solution to this problem; but I believe that our educators and our planners and leaders of public opinion must find ways and means to induce our educted youngmen and young women to work in the countryside, if our people are to progress on the right lines. Let us not forget that the Father of the Nation during the closing years of his earthly existence was engaged not only in directing the struggle for political freedom , but also in experimenting furiously how life in our villages could be so reconstructed as to enable the vast mass of our people to lead clean, healthy and contented existence.

Again, though our educational planners have been moving from experiment to experiment during the past two decades, it is alleged that there is something radically wrong with our whole system of eduction. I need not go into details, but it is almost axiomatic to say that no human system or organization can claim perfection. The story of man's progress on this earth has been, in fact, an Odyssey of trial and error. I have, however, a strong conviction that success in any field does not depend so much upon

the theoretical merits of a system, but much more so upon the spirit in which it is worked. I am not competent to speak on the subject of methodology in education; but I should desire you, in all humility, to consider an idea that has intrigued my mind over many years. One cannot imagine such two contrasted systems of education as those prevailing today in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. In the the Soviet land, the whole process is completely state-controlled, while in America it is almost a free enterprise. And yet judge either of them by their fruits, from engineering and medicine and agricutlure to the high adventuring into the regions of outer space. Obviously, both are highly successful in their results. I suppose our educators today would do well to take note of this significant phenomenon.

I wonder whether any purpose will be served by my dwelling upon that prevailing bugbear of all educationists today, I mean student indiscipline or student unrest, if you prefer to use a milder term. Except among populations which are today under totalitarian control, this student unrest is now a world-wide problem, though its quality and its quantum may differ from place to place. If I had time, I could give you off hand a score of causes why there is a lack of discipline in our educational institutions today, causes over which neither our teachers nor our students have much control. At the same time, I have to affirm here that I have completed my fairly long professional career with the firm faith that there is nothing particularly wrong with our youth today. Basically,

youngmen and young women of the present generation are as generous-hearted, as idealistic and as sincere as men and women of my own generation were, in a vastly different setting, when we were young. In this context, I should like to put a pertinent and heart-searching question to the members of the teaching profession: "Are you really satisfied that, 'by your conduct and work, you are doing all you possibly can to create among your pupils a sense of confidence that you have no other interest at heart above the good of your students?" I have no intention to be dogmatic, but I feel that if most of you have a satisfactory answer to this simple question, at least more than half of our student troubles would not be there. I know that the present youth, practically all over the world, are disillusioned with their elders. The last World War, followed by am uneasy armed peace, has not been a particularly edifying spectacle. The atrocious movies on which they are emotionally fed, day in and day out, are the least likely to inculcate in the minds of our youth a sense of responsible behaviour. The antics of our politicians are certainly not conducive to inspiring respect for their elders in the hearts of our students. Naturally, the very idea of any control or discipline imposed from without is irksome to them. To them, however, I would say, "Discipline is an essential concomitant of civilized human progress. If you are not satisfied with the ways and professions of thosd who claim to lead and control you, try to cultivate an inner self-imposed discipline, for without some kind of discipline, the human race would

fall to the level of the brute. This is a lesson, indeed, hard to teach and harder to learn, but this is a fundamental principle of education which must be ever kept in view if we are to save our social fabric from lapsing back into a state of medieval barbarism.

And what about politics to-day ? For, I am afraid, in the current transitional era in this country, it will not be possible for most of us to escape from the constant impact of politics for many long years to come. In my opinion, it is a positive indication of the maturity and the political health of a people when they are not obsessed with politics. When, for example, they generally talk not of politics but rather of weather or sport or even of the latest social scandals when they get together in eating places and common rooms and railway carriages. I think we have still to travel a long way before we reach such a happy state of affairs in this country. So, how are our youth to react to current politics ? Certainy, all of them should try to understand the day-to-day politics intelligently and objectively without taking any thing for granted. And, if they are by circumstances driven to become active politcal workers, they should bear in mind that even dedicated nationalism is not enough if it cannot rise above narrow regional barriers and embrace within its fold the whole of the human race. Above all, please remember that 'while, as citizens of a free country, it is your privilege to press for grant of your legitimate rights, your personal or group demands, should in no case encroach upon the legitimate rights of other groups and individuals. Please do not forget

for a moment that national freedom is precious and has to be guarded constantly. I am stressing this point because I feel that it is not so easy to realize, for those of you who have luckily not known this, unlike us of the older generations, what utter humiliation it meant to be the members of a conquered and subjugated race. You should consider yourselves fortunate is not having known that soul-searing experience. I am not an authority on history, but, on the basis of my limited study of human affairs, I have come to the conclusion that there is a moral law governing the movement of human history and that the law of *karma,* in a broad sense, controls and shapes the affairs of nations as it does those of individual human beings. To affirm this today may sound rather old-fashioned, but do take this idea into consideration when you give some serious thought to life and its problems.

Young graduates of the year, as you well know, I have never been prone to sermonizing young people from a high pulpit. You have all been my students till only a year ago. You will remember that occasionally I would take a little time off in the class in order to share with you my thoughts on any odd current affairs of vital interest to the student community and to seek your honest reactions without trying to impose my opinions upon you. May I recall how rewarding such little discussions used to be. It is in that spirit that I am addressing a few words, not of advice, but of caution to you. You are on the threshold of your lives and the future, with its vast possiblities, lies before you. It is you yourselves who can

make or mar this future. It has been said that "the young see visions and the old dream dreams." Pray, do not be disturbed by the dreams or nightmares of old people but see that your visions are not clouded , that these do not exclude the general good of society in your relentless pursuit of laudable personal ambitions. For, when the youth cease to have visions, the people as a whole will degenerate. Put in hard and honest work, whatever sphere you are functioning in, for as citizens of a backward country you can make little headway in this competitive world without hard and persistent labour. Shun all easy and questionable ways in trying to attain your goals. For, upon what you make of yourselves, individually and collectivelly, depends the future of this great and ancient country.

Before I close my address, permit me to quote a verse from the pen of a great Persian poet and mystic, known as Hafiz of Shiraz :-

(Listen to me, O my dear one, for more
Precious than life itself
Is held the advice of a wise old man
by deserving youngmen.)

While I am rather doubtful of my own wisdom, I hope you are all deserving of success and happiness. You have been nurtured in a region which witnessed, a few thousand years back, the full flowering of the Indo-Aryan culture of the Vedic Age, a soil which gave birth to Guru Nanak, one of the greatest apostles of peace and human brotherhood in the chequerrd history of mankind. You

are the proud inheritors of the glorious and and truly epic traditions of struggle and sacrifice enshrined in the lives of the Sikh Gurus. It devolves upon you not to do anything, by deed or thought or word, which is likely to damage or tarnish that noble heritage. And, at the close, let me remind you of that rather well-known Upanishadic prayer of most profound and sublime import, uttered about four thousand years ago by our ancient sages and seeking, not for worldly goods here and now, nor for a secure place in a paradise to come, nor even foı mere spiritual salvation, but for truth and enlightenment :-

असतो मा सत् गमय।
तमसो मा ज्यातिर्गमय।
मृत्यों माम अमृतं गमय।

From untruth lead me to truth !
From darkness lead me to light !
From death lead me to immortality !

SECTION

IV

Some Miscellary &
Book Reviews

Anatomy of Violence

It would appear that violence is a basic imperative of animal life, possibly to a lesser and varied extent of even plant life. Further, in an age gone by, I remember having been deeply moved as a young student by a highly imaginative rendering of a human experience in an unforgettable short story by Rabindra Nath Tagore which he called "Hungry Stones". Obviously, however, in spite of Nature being "red in tooth and claw" it is the human species that, with the evolution and progress of what we term as civilization, has tended to break in this regard all bounds of disciplines not unusual in varying qualities, among what we call the lesser evolved forms of life on this little home of our earth, an insignificantly tiny revolving globe in the still immeasurable vastness of cosmos.

I recall that in the thirties of the present century late Aldous Huxley-a well known and popular writer of his time-wrote a book, *Ends and Means,* in which he laboured to argues that no human objectives, however idealistic, could lead to desirable results if the means adopted, individually or collectively, for pursuing these do not pass the test of idealism on a sound ethical plane. In this context he referred to a contemporary Indian leader, M.K, Gandhi, who had by then acquired an international reputation for evolving in practice the non-violent technique of what he called Satyagraha (meaning, a struggle based on truth)

for fighting against the evil forces of tyranny and injustice. I further remember having perused about that time another book, *Ends are Means,* by an Indian Marxist intellectual, Shelvankar, and intended to be a foil to this type of "impracticable idealistic doctrine" of M.K. Gandhi. The materialistic doctrine of Marxism, idealistically conceived as an unfailing path towards the goals of social justice and equality of opportunity, was at the apex of its popularity among a vast number of social thinkers the world over six decades ago, with the U.S.S.R. forging ahead towards an unprecedented status of a super world power. It is risky to be wise about contemporary history. The recent collapse of the Soviet power, politically and economically, may, however pose the question today whether a social doctrine, conceived as only in materialistic terms, can effectively deliver the goods without being strengthened by a veneer of moral and spiritual values.

Next, let us consider for a while the future of nonviolence as preached and practised by M.K. Gandhi. It is true that, through his campaigns of non-violent mass movements in India, he removed from the down-trodden and exploited millions of his countrymen the fear of the ruler's bullets and shook to its foundation the prestige of the British Power, certainly the most powerful and most strongly-entrenched imperial authority in the annals of recorded human history. But how sad to contemplate that this most outstanding prophet of non-violence of our times failed to bring peace among the hate-packed

divisions of his own people when the day of deliverance from foreign bondage was in sight!

Does this mean that Gandhi's vision of establishing the supremacy of moral values in dealing with the problems that divide the human race into relentless antagonistic groups had vanished for ever ? Not so altogether. Even in our times, decades after Gandhi's martyrdom at the altars of truth and love, his doctrine and the traditions of his struggles served as a beacon light to the black citizens of U.S.A. when their thoroughly peaceful agitation for securing some of their basic civil rights under the dedicated leadership of Martin Luther King achieved a bloodless victory. That Martin Luther King himself later fell to an assassin's bullet does in no way diminish the ultimate superiority of moral values in dealing with the problems that divide human beings into antagonistic groups. If the human race continues to pursue the paths of violence, surely the prophets of peace like Lord Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth, Sri Rama Krishna Maharaj and M.K. Gandhi of India will have lived and preached in vain and our species is doomed to extinction. Even today, apart from the danger of the comparatively slow-moving process of environmental pollution and degeneration, we are almost ripe for extinction through sudden and uncontrolled breaking loose of the nuclear proliferation. Within the lifetimes of many of us living today the world has witnessed two unprecedentally devastating global wars which several of the principal participants claimed were being fought to usher in an

era of perpetual peace and prosperity for the human race.

The close of the second global war ushered in an era of cold war between the two super powers of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., during which a breakout of a fresh world conflagration was held in abeyance only through what a commentator called "a balance of terror" imposed by heavily equipped arsenals of nuclear weaponry by both the parties. With the present economic and political disarray of the Soviet Empire, the so-called cold war has come to a close. But if any single minor or major power by error or design starts a nuclear onslaught anywhere, it may spell an instant and total collapse of what we call civilization.

Another special legacy of the Second World War is an incalculable production by many powers of highly sophisticated conventional weaponry of easily portable dimesions for being dumped among the less advanced countries recently liberated from foreign domination. This has resulted in interminable conflicts among close neighbours and apparently unending civil wars between rival political factions in many of these countries in various regions of the world. And the tragic irony of this widely-ranging instability in the world cannot be defused either by the U.N.O. intervention or through the efforts of the sole surviving super power of U.S.A., with all its immense military and economic power. So the poor semi-starved populations as in Serbia-Bosnia, Somalia, Angola, Haiti and so on continue to suffer untold miseries in the absence of both economic viability and basic human liberties.

Let us for a while turn our attention in the context of this wide-ranging violence to what is happening in the strife-torn regions of Jammu and Kashmir. Having remained continuously attached to and based in the Valley of Kashmir till the close of 1989, I am not disposed to agree with those who believe that, in view of the Muslim majority of the population, the eruption of a situation like the present one was inevitable from the very start.

Those who were witness like myself to the events of the autumn of 1947, when the tribal invasion was unleashed against Kashmir by Pakistan, cannot accept this verdict. Why go so far back as to 1947? The truth is that Kashmiri Muslims got alienated during long years of maladministration and mistaken policies adopted by the government both at the centre and in the state. Even so, those who like myself were witness also to the State assembly elections in June 1977 held under Governor's rule will bear witness to the very favourable reaction of the common folk to this rare instance of a free and fair election conducted in the State. The credit for this gesture must go to the political wisdom of late Morarji Desai who then headed the Janata Government in Delhi.

One need not probe in detail the present tragic situation in the Valley of Kashmir. It is obvious that the normal administrative machinery completely collapsed in that region of Jammu and Kashmir State. Many champions of civil rights, both in India and abroad, have

been vociferous in their condemnation of the so-called excesses of the Indian security forces, while many of them prefer to close their eyes to the ample misdeeds of the numerous foreign militant outfits operating there. The most pitiable targets of this violence have obviously been the members of the minority communities of Kashmir, driven out of their centuries old homeland and now living in subhuman conditions in camps around Jammu, Udhampur, Delhi, and other centres as refugees in their own land. But what about Kashmiri Muslims themselves? All the nation-building achievements garnered, in spite of adminstrative corruption and misrule, during the past four decades have been destroyed beyond repair. The most dismal aspect of this damage is that all eductional activities have ground to a halt. Even when peace is finally restored in Kashmir in God's good time, this damage may not be reparied even in the course of half a century or more. The whole situation is so much loaded with diverse complications thatneither independence nor murger with Pakistan is within sight. At present, the current state of turmoil can continue indenfinitely at immense cost to both India and Pakistan and involving incalculable damage to the vital interests of Kashmiris. It is time that those who claim to speak for the people of Kashmir should now seriously consider what they should do to rescue them from the present impasse. Let them understand that when the U.S.A., with its tremendous resources of all types, cannot easily bring peace and stability to its neighbouring petty state of Haiti, it is nothing short of living in a fool's

paradise for any one to expect her to help effectively in restoring peace and stability in Kashmir. Obviously, with its complex, demographic and political ramifications and more than four decades' division of the state through the ceasefire line of 1949, it is not possible now to reconstruct the region as it was functioning till 1947. It is , however, for those who can to some extent deliver the goods to pause and ponder for seeking a return of peace and security to all the people of the state, including those who got uprooted from its soil since early 1990 onwards.

from Koshur Samachar

New Delhi

Shivratri in Kashmir

The Hindu calendar is quite crowded with holy days and traditional festivals throughout the year. Some of these have been observed from a time going back to a past beyond recorded history. These are meant to commemorate the achievements, both legendary and historical, of epic heroes, the birth anniversaries of known saints of history as also of mythical deities and traditional divine incarnations of the supreme gods like Vishnu and Shiva. These recurring observations are generally dated according to the Hindu lunar calendar to which a thirteenth month is added once in every two and a half years to bring it in line with the Hindu solar calendar of 365 odd days.

So far as Kashmir is concerned, because of its comparative geographical isolation from the rest of the subcontinent, the Kashmiri Brahmins have through centuries added to these religious festivals days sacred to the worship of the Valley's rivers, perennial springs, lakes and mountain peaks. Moreover, probably after the evolution of a distinctive local Shaiva religious cult, called Kashmir Shaivism, among the all-India festivals observed with obvious regional variations, the Maha Shivratri, has been observed in Kashmir for centuries with special fervor and elaborate ritual extending over the major portion of the first dark fortnight of the lunar month of Phalgun, corresponding to the month of February in the

international calendar. It may easily be accepted as the principal sacred annual festival of Kashmiri Brahmins and, in view of its length and religious-cum-social overtones, may be compared to the elaborate Durga Puja festival celebrated with equal devotion and enthusiasm by the Hindus of Bengal around September - October every year.

The main point of relevance in the context of this festival is the 13th night of the Phalgun month when Lord Shiva is believed to have solemnized his union with Goddess Parvati or Durga, symbolizing in her self the Divine *Shakti* that stands for the eternal active creative force behind all visible forms of life.

This celebration of Maha Shivratri has been traditionally observed through a programme covering the major part of the first Phalgun fortnight. While the main celebration starts with eighth of the fortnight, a day devoted to thorough house-cleaning in anticipation of the close approach of the spring season following the long and severe snowbound winter in the Valley, the week preceding would be devoted to storing all the wherewithal required for several days of ritualistic worship and the feasting and merry-making that would accompany it.

The ritual worship would start on the tenth evening. For this quite a number of freshly-baked clean earthenware pots had to be secured from a local potter. These were then embellished with flowers tied round their mouths after these were placed in proper order in the room usually reserved for daily worship. The two larger

vessels— meant to symbolize Shiva and Parvati—were then were filled with clean water usually drawn from a flowing current. While the main earthen vessels were filled to the brim with dried walnuts of the preceding autumn, vessels meant to represent lesser deities were similarly readied for formal worship, a couple or more of these were kept dry and were intended to represent lesser deities called *Bhairavas.* According to Kashmiri tradition these Bhairavas were recognized as special attendants of a lesser grade in the service of God Shiva.

So from the night of eleventh day the ritual worship would start and reach its climax on the night of the thirteenth, when elaborate ceremonial worship would continue far into the night, usually under the direction of a professional Brahmin priest, followed by an elaborate feast for the whole family including any chance guests on the day.

Following the elaborate worship on the thirteenth night, ritualistic *puja* of the sanctified vessels would continue for a couple of mornings and evenings till on the 15th morning all the vessels were got collected in a basket, emptied of the walnuts kept soaked over the period, and then taken to a stream or river for a final ritual immersion, just as in Bengal the images of Durga are immersed at the close of the festival in the waters of the Ganga. The soaked walnuts, as we know, were then distributed among the family, friends and close relatives as the chief sacred *prasad* of the festival.

Finally, it may be recalled that the celebration of Maha Shivratri had some traditional social aspects too. For example, all young married girls were expected to move to the homes of their husbands well before the festival started, with major presents in cash and kind from their parents' families. More gifts for them were usual when the *prasad* in the form of soaked walnuts were sent to them at the close of the festival. This use of dried walnuts for worship and *prasad* is something very unique in the observance of Shivratri among Kashmiri Brahmins. Possibly, this use of walnuts has some symbolic purpose in as much as dried seeds when soaked pave the way for renewal of life from objects that were supposed to be dead.

Finally, many of us with our social roots back in Kashmir have to adjust ourselves to the vastly changed mores of living prevailing in distant regions and continents. Even so, we should try to observe this festival regularly, maybe on a restricted scale according to our hoary traditions of Kashmir.

from Koshur Samachar
New Delhi

Bureaucrazy : IAS Unmasked by M.K.Kaw, a Review

Shri M.K. Kaw, IAS, apart from having earned for himself an enviable reputation as a competent administrator, has by now in addition also established his status as a successful writer through the media of both English and Hindi. The great pleasure that I derived from reading this volume prompts me to review this publication, a collection of racy essays dwelling on large scale and ever-growing army of our administrative machine, now called the I.A.S.

As is well-known, the I.A.S. was started soon after our political emancipation in August, 1947, and assiduously groomed to replace the celebrated Indian Civil Service of the British Raj, which by its admirers was once called the "steel frame" that held this vast sub-continent together in one piece for about a century, while an eminent Indian patriot ridiculed it, at the turn of the century, as being a foreign colonial body which was "*neither civil*, nor *Indian* nor meant for the *service*" of the vast population they governed with an iron hand. Following the retirement of the last of the Indian stalwarts holding the magic appellation of "I.C.S." against their names, the present overall set-up of our administration completely ceased to be the steel frame revolving round the dictatorial control of a district satrap.

Surely, it is now time for us to ponder, in what ways, after the lapse of nearly five decades of political independence our all India services are functioning in the vastly changed scenario of various types in our land. For one, the last Indian holders of the magic honorific of "I.C.S" have gone into limbo several decades back, like the summary dislodging of the gods of a bygone age. Next, by the middle sixties we witness the near end of a race and fairly sizeable race of stern, selfless, principled and largely pragmatic political leaders, who had taken over the reins of power in the truncated sub-contient from the British authorities by the middle of 1947. The past three decades also witnessed the emergence and unchecked proliferation of a new crowd of wirepullers— an ever-increasing population of whole-time politicians from the district right up to the central levels, an up-coming army of high industrialists, black marketeers, "money bags", competent wheeler-dealers of varied and brazen patrons of armed hoodlums. In the administrative system itself there has cropped up a class of influential "key bosses" of the go-getter type close to the centres of power in Delhi and the state capitals.

So, where do we stand today ? Decisions of national importance, advantageous postings at home and abroad, special promotions, selective opportunities provided for displaying merit and efficiency by individual and well-connected personnel, and the assignment of foreign jaunts to a favoured few, are manipulated on the time-honoured principle of nepotism, personal equations with the holders

of keys to centres of power, and the capacity of an individual to adapt and adjust himself to the ever–shifting patterns of power. In this free-for-all scenario, even blandishments by co-quettish and charming young ladies are not ruled out as a means of securing the coveted power and prestige. M.K. Kaw, an intelligent and Argus-eyed insider, has, in this volume, drawn lurid pictures in their naked detail of the sort of consequent inevitable and unsavoury goings-on at all levels of governance, high and not so high. Moreover, the author has succeeded in narrating his stories and incidents in a flawless but characteristic style all his own. In fact, among the chief merits of this exercise lie the diverse literary techniques and artistry with which the end results are achieved through the deft devices of humour, irony, satire, innuendo, facts cleverly hidden as fiction, and subtle allusive remarks, with a reasonable modicum of fictional exaggeration.

To conclude, the total impression conveyed through these essays on the current functioning of our "Bureaucrazy" may sound as rather alarming. But, possibly, all large-scale administrative organizations in most of the countries of major size and clout round the globe today, democratic, dictatorial, affluent and not-so-affluent, must be affected by the complexity generated by the corresponding human and economic pressures. Moreover, here in India, "that is Bharat", with *Satyameva Jayate* as its national motto, we may seek some minor consolation in the somewhat fitful and tentative

functioning of our higher judiciary, the occasional prankish but curative shenanigans of our Chief Election Commissioner, the obvious good sense of the vast mass of our voters, and a largely uncommitted press, and carry, on in the hope that, in spite of "a thousand mutinies" spitting forth widespread turmoil, we may possibly be prevented from sliding down to the very bottom of the Slough of Despond !

Finally, it is good if while enjoying reading M.K. Kaw's book we may at the same time accept it as a warning call, "Whither India" ?

from "Koshur Samachar"

New Delhi

Self-study in a Circle by P.Krishan Kaul : a Review

This is a recent publication of a deeply spiritual import by a London-based relative of mine, Shri P. Krishan Kaul. I have known the author since the days he was a student at S.P. College, Srinagar. He is by profession a very successful and competent engineer. I know he has been for years a fervent devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the book is dedicated to that internationally known and widely esteemed saint and seer. This publication has been highly appreciated among others by Dr. L.M. Singhvi, till recently India's eminent and highly learned. High Commissioner in London.

As I presumed, the book dwells mainly on the deep spiritual values and practices identified with the personality of Sai Maharaj. But it also goes deeper into the eternal deep values and practices embodied for all seekers and for all times in our ancient scriptures recorded by our anonymous prehistoric savants in the Rig Veda and the Upanishads and later further propounded by our historic sages starting from Adi Shankara down to very recent times in India. I am impressed by the fact that a busy engineer like Shri P. Krishan Kaul has delved deep into our ancient spiritual lore and around the mystic significance of Kundalani Yoga.

Moreover, to the eternal questions of the significance

of reality and illusion, the author brings to bear his close acquaintance with the visions of mystics and poets as of world-wide stature, like Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, Saint Francis of Assisi and Lalleshwari of Kashmir. Moreover, regarding the reported phenomena of miracles, he appears to bring to bear on the plausibility of such wonders the latest knowledge of modern science which tends to question the material reality of things and of man's continuing quest for the still hidden nature of time and space.

I am sure that all those interested in the quest for the basic reality of the world as perceived through our sense perceptions will find a perusal of this volume very rewarding. The author surely deserves commendation for this enterprise.

from Koshur Samachar

New Delhi

Come with Me to India by Sudha Kaul, a Review

I have had occasion to read this publication with a special interest and pleasure. The author is from Kashmir, now settled in U.S.A. with her husband and children. I wonder whether she can recall this when I say that I had known her a little as a very intelligent young girl. In fact, I have had a sort of close association with her family through yester years, as her father, Colonel (Rtd.) Lokesh Dhar, was my student, while her grand-father, late Professor S.L.Dhar, was my respected teacher and later my colleague.

In my opinion, while this publication cannot be accepted as a serious research production relating to the ancient culture and panomaric personality of the land called India, that is Bharat, I have felt after my visits to U.S.A. during 1990-96 that this book would prove a very readable, lucid and brief introduction to the country of their racial and cultural origin for most of our young folk born, raised and educated in the U.S.A.

The plan of this book is simple but interesting, very well suited to the sensitivities and perceptions of our expatriate young people now visiting India on a short holiday for sight-seeing or meeting their friends and close or distant relations. The book starts with a few chapters dealing with the latest means of travel to and in India,

with a sort of picture of the varied topography of the country visible even from an aeroplane. This follows with a chapter summarizing the known and recorded historical events of the country from the time of the raid of Alexander the Great down to our own times, fancifully entitled "What happened on the road from Indus to Independence"

While reading through this slender volume, I was also reminded of my reactions on seeing persons of Indian and Pakistani origins and now working in North America getting along so well together both socially and culturally. This was a phenomenon not easily intelligible to ordinary American citizens. So I tried to explain to some educated American people that, after all, while we in India were culturally composed of varied regional patterns, among all such regional and linguistic groups people of different religious persuasions had lived in peace and harmony for several centuries past. Now that most of the European colonial empires have vanished from the map of the earth, the seeds of dissension assiduously planted and nursed by foreign imperialists over long stretches of their rule have left behind problems still defying solutions in various areas of Africa, East Asia, West Asia and even in ethnically European Ireland. In this context, I believe that this book may be perused with interest even by young persons of Pakistani origin born and raised in North America.

Finally, I have noted in this book a few minor misconceptions, like the nature and measure of the so-

called Black Hole tragedy of Calcutta (1757) and a discrepancy about who deputed Sir Staford Cripps to settle the Indian problem in early 1942. These minor oversights could be corrected in a second edition. So let me close by recording that the book is very well written in lucid and standard English, still the Queen's English, untouched by any Americanisms that have by now become accepted as an integral part of what is now easily the most widely known tongue of commerce and basic inter course in all the regions of the world.

from Koshur Samachar

New Delhi



About the Author

Prof. Shyam Lal Pandit was born at Kulgam, Kashmir, in January, 1908. After passing B.A. (Hons.) in first class from Panjab University, Lahore, he got a first class first in M.A. (English) from Lucknow University in 1930. He taught for nearly twenty-five years at the various government colleges in Jammu & Kashmir, and rose to be the Principal of the Amar Singh College, Srinagar. Later, as the first Head of the Postgraduate Department of English, University of Jammu & Kashmir, he gave the lead to post-graduate teaching in Kashmir. Towards the end of his distinguished career, he was, for seven years, Principal, Panjab University Evening College, Jalandhar. Prof. Pandit has contributed numerous critical essays on literature, history and society to various reputed journals. He divides his time between Delhi and USA, where some of his children are now settled.

BOOKS ON KASHMIR

THE AWAKENING OF SUPREME CONSCIOUSNESS

Lecutres of Swami Lakshman Joo

by Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

INTRUDED MOORINGS THE KASHMIR PERSPECITVE

by M. K. Raina Ratnakar

BUDDHIST SAVANTS OF KASHMIR

by Advai tavadini Kaul

ASPECTS OF KASHMIR SAIVISM

by Dr. B.N. Pandit

BEAUTIFUL VALLEYS OF KASHMIR AND LADAKH

by Samsar Chand Koul

SOCIOLOGY OF NAMES AND NICKNAMES OF INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KASHMIR

by R.K. Koul

BIRDS OF KASHMIR

by Samsar Chand Koul

A HISTORY OF KASHMIRI PANDIT

by Justice J.L. Kilam

THE VEDANTA DINDIMAH (DRUM-BEATS OF VEDANTA)

by Jankinath Kaul Kamal

UTPAL PUBLICATIONS
R-22, Khaneja Complex
Main Market, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092
Phone : 2464458, 6493456

M.K.